

Saivite Sculptures of Kashmir

(A historical approach)



Foreword
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Foreword

The literary and archaeological evidence bearing on the conceptual and visual representations of god Śiva is of a varied nature. It points to the importance and wide recognition of this deity and also to the cult which grew around him. Due to certain cogent factors the worship of Śiva became popular throughout the country. Besides, he became famous as one of the chief Indian deities in several countries outside India.

The concept of Śiva was evolved out of the Vedic deity Rudra, who represented the elements of awe and the irresistible force of nature. Yāska, and some other early Vedic commentators, identified Rudra with Agni, the destructive power¹. This idea continued its association with the deity even when the archaic idea about him was mellowed down in course of time.

The designation *Tryambaka*, used for Śiva in the later texts, originally stood for *Paramātmā*, the supreme deity. Goddess Ambikā, who was subsequently recognised as the consort of Śiva, is mentioned as the sister of Rudra². The later conceptions, that Śiva has three eyes, that he drank poison (which made him *Nīlagrīva*), that he wears tiger-skin and garlands of snakes, are conspicuous by their absence in the Vedic literature. According to some of the early Vedic texts, the clouds (*megha*, also called *giri*) were the abodes of Agni (i. e. lightning). This formed the

basis for making the Kailāsa mountain residence of Śive. Similarly, *Vṛṣabha* (meaning cloud in the early texts) came to be associated with Rudra-Śiva as his *vāhana* (mount)

Gradually, the epithets of Śiva and his functions increased. In the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* Agni has eight names, including the name Rudra.³ This gave an idea to the writers of several Purāṇas that Śiva had eight heads. The number, however, increased in mythology and art. According to the numbers of the three *guṇas* four Vedas and five natural elements (sky, water, fire, earth and air) the number of Śiva's heads became three, four and five respectively. Similarly, 7 to 12 Rudras (usually recognised as 11) were also mentioned in several Purāṇas and the Tantra texts. Besides Viṣṇu, Śiva became the second important deity who influenced the imagination of the Purāṇa writers.

The Vedic-Purāṇic concepts about Rudra-Śiva gradually developed into various manifestations of this deity. One of his popular forms was the phallus, symbol of prowess and fecundity. The flames of burning fire go up horizontally resmbing 'Śiśna or *linga*. This basic concept gave rise to the cult-image resembling *Jyotirlinga*. The Āryans originally did not adhere to the *linga* worship. They rather abhorred the idea, as can be inferred from their spiteful attitude towards the *śiśnadevas*, referred to in the early Vedic texts.

In the developing Purāṇic pantheon, Rudra was given the form of a benevolent deity and was designated as Śiva. He was given a privileged place among the three main deities (*trimūrti* or *trinity*). Enormous literature grew around him in the form of separate Śaiva Purāṇas and the āgama literature. The earlier fierce form of Rudra was converted into Śankara, of auspicious nature, the bestower of happiness. This kind of transformation can be compared with the malevolent Yakṣas, who were later on bestowed with the softer and nobler qualities.

Śiva of the *Purāṇas* and *Āgamas*, assumed various interesting forms in literature and art. He became husband of Umā, the daughter of Himavān (the Himālayas). He was raised to the position of *Mahādeva*, a *Yogī*, a *natarāja* and an expounder of high philosophical tenets. His depiction in the art-forms is indicative of the variegated nature of the deity⁴.

It is illuminating to note that the later literary accounts and the iconographic prescriptions for Śiva tend to retain his early Rudra form in various ways. The *āyudhas* associated with Śiva, such as *triśūla*, *damaru*, *vajra*, *pāśa*, *sarpa*, *ankuśa*, *mundamāla* and *agni* are clear indication of this. His five main forms represent the mingling of two divergent aspect of Śiva. These five forms are : *Sadyojāta*, *Anugraha*, *Aghora*, *Īśāna* and *Tatpuruṣa*. Śiva in course of time, became a fully Āryan deity, occupying a prominent position. Various superhuman elements were attributed to him. From the Sungasātavāhana period onwards the Śiva cult developed and attained popularity far and wide. The Śaivites regarded him as the supreme god. An enormous literature grew up around the deity. Artists of different regions portrayed Śiva in various forms, sometimes with their imaginative innovations.

The purāṇas, the Āgamas and other texts give detailed accounts of the iconography of various forms of Śiva. When the idea of the *Pancadevas* gained ground, various syncratic statues, showing Śiva conjointly with deities such as Viṣṇu, Sūrya and Umā, were carved. The images of Hari-hara, Harihara-Hiranyagarabha, Ardhanārīśvara and a few other forms indicate this fusion. The *vibhava* aspect of Śiva and its gradual development is also quite interesting. The Puranic and agamic prescriptions in regard to the *vibhava* aspects are discernible in ancient Indian art.

Apart from the *saumya* forms of Śiva, numerous statues of the deity, representing him in the fierce attitude, are known. Śiva is shown killing Tripura, Gajāśura, Andhaka, etc. These aspects of the deity represent his *samhāra* (destructive) aspects.

The images of Śiva with Umā in various forms, such as *ālingana*, *vrīṣabhārohana*, *parīṇaya* (*Kalyāṇasundara*), etc. are remarkable for their unusual aesthetic excellence⁵.

In the region of Madhya Pradesh the Purāṇic Śaivism took its roots by c. 200 B. C. A good number of copper coins found at Ujjain, Vidisha, Pawaya (distt. Gwalior) and Kutwar (distt. Morena) depict the human form of Śiva. He is usually shown holding *daṇḍa* (staff) and *Kamaṇḍalu* (water pitcher) in his hands. His *Jatājuṭa* and *vyāghracarma* (tiger-skin) can be seen on several coins.

The early copper coins from Ujjain are quite important in this respect. On them the portrayal of Śiva is seen in various forms. He usually stands alone, sometime with the bull *nandī* looking attentively at his Lord. On some rare coins both Śiva and Pārvatī are seen standing together⁶. The most remarkable coins from Ujjain are those representing Śiva in the dancing attitude⁷.

The region of Kashmir, on account of its strategic geographical position, developed a culture with striking regional peculiarities. Its contribution to Sanskrit language and literature is well-known. In the fields of religion, society and plastic and pictorial arts, Kashmir made continuous progress, particularly during the period between almost the beginning of the Christian era to c. 1200 A. D. The literary and archaeological source-material throws interesting light on various facets of political and cultural developments in the valley.

The philosophical aspects of Kashmir Śaivism have been studied by several scholars, who have based their studies mainly on the āgamic and purāṇic source-material.

In the present work Dr. Uma Pandey has made a critical and detailed study of the Śaiva-āgamas of Kashmir, with particular

emphasis on the socio-economic ideas and institutions, which developed in Kashmir. The study has been done in a chronological sequence. Various geographical factors and the elements arising out of the inter-relation of Kashmir with the contiguous region of Central Asia have duly been highlighted. The present work, undoubtedly, is a welcome addition to the previous studies on the culture of Kashmir.

SAGAR
September 14, 1988

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3. *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*, VI, 3, 18.
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7. J. Allan, *Catalogue of the Indian Coins in the British Museum* (London, 1936),
pp. 527, pl. 36, figs. 1-3. The view of Dr. J. N. Banerjea that the two figures
represent Yakṣha and Yakṣṇī does not seem to be convincing. See his
Development of Hindu Iconography p. 150.

Preface

The present work deals with the emergence of Kashmir Śaivism in the valley in 8th Cent. A.D. The approach to the subject is historical. The birth of this particular system of philosophy is not an accident. Many factors such as geographical, social, religious and others are responsible for the emergence of Kashmir Śaivism in the Valley. The scholars of various disciplines of learning, who took shelter in the valley from time to time provided a framework for this system of philosophy. The present work discusses in detail all such factors which led to the birth of Kashmir Śaivism in the valley in the 8th Cent. A.D.

Books are written on the history of Kashmir philosophy and on the culture of the Valley. But no attempt has been made so far to analyse the causes which led to the birth of Kashmir Śaivism in the valley. The present work, therefore, is a novel one in its approach.

A serene atmosphere, far from the maddening crowd, is needed for art and literature to flourish. The geographical position of the valley in the Himalayan ranges provided a well-protected calm atmosphere for different branches of learning to be pursued here. Consequently, scholars from far and wide flocked here. As a result different cultures and religious sects flourished in the valley unhampered from time immemorial. Advent of Buddhism and the visit of Śankara to the valley provided a framework to be

adopted by Kashmir Śaivism. Men, material and need of the day led to the emergence of Kashmir saivism in the Valley.

The birth of Śaivism in Kashmir brought a revolutionary change in the outlook of scholars, artists and even of common men. Consequently new interpretations were given to literature, art and religion. Many new theories in the field of poetics came into existence. Thus this system of philosophy has a long ranging effect on art and literature. Even the religious life and ritual of the common man could not remain unaffected by the philosophy.

The Śaiva-āgamas and archaeological remains are the main sources of study.

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—Uma Pandey

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Geology and Geography

Jammu and Kashmir is the northern most state of India. For its various qualities several other names had been bestowed on it. Its magniloquent high Himalayan ranges, clad with white sheet of snow, patches of meadows scattered all over its lap, multicoloured flowers with sweet fragrance, lakes, rivers and rivulets strewn all over the valley have rightly earned for Kashmir valley the epithet 'Heaven on earth' or the 'Happy Valley'. The calm and quiet atmosphere of the valley, far from the mading crowd, was a place of learning since the hoary antiquity. Like Varanasi, scholars used to visit Kashmir for higher studies in different fields

of knowledge. Hence it was also known as '*Śārdāpīṭha*' or the 'Seat of the goddess of learning'. The Himalayas, with their caves and thick forests, lured spiritual teachers to perform austerity in the calm atmosphere. It was, therefore, also known as '*Tapobhūmi*' or '*Devabhūmi*'.

The name of this region as Kashmir is quite ancient and well known. According to the *Nīlamatapurāṇa*, the valley of Kashmir remained submerged under water since the time of creation. In the seventh *Manavantara*, the water of this vast lake, known as *Satīsara* was drained off at the instance of lord Viṣṇu to kill the demon Jalodbhava residing therein. Later sage Kaśyapa settled the descenedents of Manu and the Piśācas to live along with the Nāgas, the original inhabitants of the valley. Since then the valley is known as '*Kaśyapapura*' or the city of sage Kaśyapa of which Kashmir or Kāshmir is the distorted form. According to a foreign writer, the original name of this region was '*Kaśapamara*'. Here '*mara*' stands for '*maṭha*' or 'place' from which the name Kashmir is said to be derived. Keeping in view the pleasant climate of the valley, some people derive the name Kashmir from '*Ka*' and '*Samīra*', 'water' and 'air' respectively.

In the *Nīlamatapurāṇa*¹ the valley is called *Kaśmīrā* while the inhabitants call it as *Kaśīr* in Kashmiri language, which is a derivative of '*Kaśmīra*' through '*Kaśvir*', which according to Stein, is used as *Kaspiria* by Ptolemy and as *Kaspeiroi* by Dionysios, a transcription of *Kaśvir*. The *Nīlamatapurāṇa* rarely uses the term '*Kaśmīra*', while the *Rājtarangīnī*² mentions both the names of the valley. In the *Bṛhatsaṃhitā* of Varahamihira *Kaśmīra* and *Kaśmīraka* are used for the inhabitants of Kashmir region.³ According to the Mughal emperor Babar the word '*Kashmira*' is derived from a hill tribe, '*Kās*', living in the neighbourhood of Kashmir.⁴ Whatever be the origin of the term Kashmir, its continued use in an unbroken chain of documents can be traced back from time immemorial.

The *Nīlamata* gives a mythical account of the origin of the valley, its inhabitants and their culture. It is an encyclopaedic book dealing with various aspects of Kashmir region. According to it, the land of Kashmir, in the beginning, was covered by a vast lake called *Satīśara* for sixth *manvantara* since the beginning of the *Kalpa*. In the seventh *manvantara*, the water of the lake was drained off through an outlet by Ananta as ordered by Viṣṇu, because gods and goddesses wanted the demon Jalodbhava, residing therein to be killed. After the death of the demon, sage Kaśyapa made the Piśācas and the descendents of Manu to settle there with the original inhabitants of the valley, the Nāgas.⁶ Kalhaṇa has also borrowed this mythical origin in his *Rājataranginī*. With slight change the same story occurs in several other works.⁷ Geological proofs have also supported the origin of the valley from a lake.

The Vedic literature is silent about Kashmir. But some scholars have tried to identify the Vedic river, *Marudvṛdhā* (Rg. X 75.5) with a small stream Maruwardwan flowing in Kashmir and have concluded that Āryans were familiar at least with a smaller part of this region⁸. But several other scholars do not agree with it⁹.

The earliest reference to Kashmir is found in Pānini's grammar and Patanjali's commentary on it. There the word *Kaśmīra* and *Kāśmīra* are used for the country and its inhabitants respectively. References are there in the *Mahābhārata*¹⁰ and in some of the *Purāṇas*¹¹ to Kashmir, but detailed information is lacking. These *Purāṇas* enlist it in the north region of India. The *Padmapurāṇa* tells us that Kashmir was famous for its *Kumkuma*, *Usīra* and Sandal. It also mentions that the city was situated on the river *Vitastā* and was the seat of goddess *Saraswatī*. In the *Mahābhārata* it is said that the Kshatriyas of Kashmir were conquered by Arjuna and the King of Kashmir was present at the *Rājsūya* sacrifice of Yudhiṣṭhira and presented him products of

the vally. According to the *Kathāsaritsāgara*, it was enriched by the Himalayas and the river *Vitastā* (Jhelum) flowed along it. Its capital city was called *Hiraṇyapura*.

Varāhamihira (C.500 A.D.) in his *Bṛhatsamhitā* includes Kashmir region in the north-eastern division. He also mentions some tribes such as *Abhisaras*, *Daradas*, *Khaśas* and others inhabiting there. This has been confirmed from other sources also. But detailed geographical account of this region is lacking. The main reason for this was the geographical position which kept Kashmir almost isolated from the rest of the country. But this solitary confinement of the valley has been beneficiary in other respects. Those ethnic and political changes, which swept the other parts of the country from time to time, left the vally untouched. Consequently, local traditions remained intact, which help in the socio-cultural study of the valley. In the words of Stein, the 'local tradition remained undisturbed and still clings to all prominent sites with that tenacity which is characteristic of Alpine tracts all over the world'¹².

There are other texts written by local writers of the valley. These works give more information about the region, its inhabitants, culture and beliefs. In the absence of epigraphical records, except a few fragmentary inscriptions of late period, these literary works can be called authentic sources for understanding the valley and its people from various aspects.

Kalhana's Rājataranginī, written in 1148-49 A.D., provides the history of the various dynasties which ruled over Kashmir from the earliest period to the time of the author. In the absence of other evidence, it has a unique place in building the history of the valley. It has taken help from other chronicles which have been lost. It begins with the origin of the valley, an account taken from the *Nīlamatapurāṇa*, and narrates the religious and political conditions of the valley under the rule of various

dynasties upto his time. The poet-historian is more accurate in narrating the socio-political conditions of his time than that of legendary kings mentioned in the first four parts of the work.

To continue the tradition, set by Kalhana, Jonaraja wrote the *Rājāwali*. He takes the thread from Kalhana and narrates the history down to the reign of sultan Zāinu-l-abidin, who died in 1459 A.D. His pupil Srivara reached the narration upto 1484 A.D. in his *Jain-Rājataranginī*. Prajyabhatta and Śuka brought the historical narration of Kashmir upto 1486 A.D. in the *Rājavalīpatākā*.

Apart from these poet-historians, there are other Kashmiri writers who wrote independently about their region. Among them Kshemendra is most important. He flourished in the later half of the 11th Cent. His *Samayamātrikā* provides detailed information about the valley. Bilhan's *Vikramānkadevacharita*, presents a glowing picture of the beauties of the valley. Poet Mankha's *Srīkanthacarita* gives a detailed description of Kashmir and its capital Pravarapur. Another work called '*Lokaprakāśa*', attributed to Kshemendra, gives the administrative aspect of the valley. One can know about the number of Parganās, contracts and official reports etc. from it.

The oldest text, which deals in detail with the religious places of Kashmir, is the *Nīlamatapūrāṇa*. It gives a legendary account of the origin, of the valley and speaks about the ordinances issued by Nīla, the lord of Kashmir Nāgas, for worshipping deities and performing rites at different religious occasions. Thus it is a real mine of information, regarding the sacred places of Kashmir and their legends.

The *Haracaritacintāmaṇi* of Jayadrath, brother of Jayarath, deals with legends of Śiva and his various incarnations, a popular deity of the valley. He lived about the end of the 12th century A. D. or in the beginning of the 13th Cent. The detailed

exposition help in understanding the religious and economic life of the people and the religious places that had undergone change after Kalhaṇa.

There are numerous texts known as the *Mahātmyas* dealing with important *Tīrthas* of Kashmir. With a few exceptions, they are extracted from *Purāṇas* and *Samhitās*, especially from *Bṛhatsamhitā*. These works also help in understanding the old topography of Kashmir.

Apart from the other sources of information, there is the local tradition of the 'learned' paṇḍit families of Srinagar. Among them, the name of Sahibram Pandit is of special reference. On the request of Maharaja Ranbir Singh, he prepared a descriptive survey of all ancient *Tīrthas* of Kashmir under the title '*Kaśmīra-tīrth Saṃgraha*'. He has given the position of each *Tīrtha*, mentioning its territorial boundaries.

The *Mahāvamśa* tells us as to how Buddhism entered the valley. It throws light on the Buddhist activities in Kashmir. From a few inscriptions and the Chinese records it is clear that Buddhism was flourishing in the valley from 2nd to 7th cent. A.D.

In the writings of Herodotos, the father of history, reference is there to the city of Kaspetyros which he places in the Paktyan land, bordering on the Bactrian territory. The place meant by Herodotos is the same that Hekataeos knew before him by the name of Kaspetyros, the city of Gandarians.

It Ptolemy's Asiatic Geography mention is made to a region called Kaspeira, situated below the source of the Bidaspes, *Vitastā* the Sandabal (*Chandrabhāgā*) and of the Adris, (*Irāvātī*). The geographical boundaries mentioned by him are, however, correct to some extent. But these reference do not throw light on the life of the people accept its geographical name.

Chinese records furnish detailed reports about Kashmir. China was aware of this region as its Buddhist pilgrims on their way to sacred places in India chose the valley as their resting place. The word 'Ki-pin' was used by the Chinese. Whether it particularly referred to Kashmir can not be ascertained. It is however, clear that the word 'Ki-pin' was first used for the Upper Kabul Valley.

Clear references are available from the accounts of Chinese pilgrims Hiuen Tsiang and Ou-k' Ong. The first Chinese pilgrim, who visited the valley in the early 5th cent. A.D., gives a vivid description of it. He tells us that the valley was surrounded by high mountains giving protection to it from neighbouring states. About the inhabitants he tells us that they were good looking and had an aptitude for learning. Hiuen Tsiang stayed at Jayendra Vihāra for studying the classical literature. The recent discovery of a large number of Kharosthi inscriptions in the Gilgit-Hunja has clearly indicated that India's relations with China had started about one hundred B. C. The inscription and figures of Indian deities have been found in the above mentioned area which was located on the China's silk route.

The Annals of the Tang dynasty also speak about Kashmir. It mentions the arrival of an ambassador in the Chinese court from Kashmir under the rulership of Chandrapīda and his brother Muktapīda shortly after 713 A. D. References are there to the city Po-lo-ou-lo-po-lo, that is Pravarpur, an official name of Srinagar and the river Vitastā.

In 759 A.D., Ou-K'ong, another Chinese pilgrim visited the valley from Gandhāra. He spent full four years in visiting the holy places and studying Sanskrit. The number of *stūpas* and *viḥāras* mentioned by him is larger than that of Hiuen Tsiang, which indicates the rise in the popularity of Buddhism. He describes the valley as connected with Tibet, Baltistān and Gandhār.

After the Greeks and the Chinese, the early Arabs are our next foreign informants about the historical geography of India in general and Kashmir in particular. But as far as the topography of Kashmira is concerned they have little to say. The reason is quite evident. Though the Arabs entered the country in the 8th cent. A. D. and spread over almost the whole northern India, Kashmir with its mountaneous rampart remained aloof for centuries even after their entrance in the country. That is why in the writings of early Arabs, account of Kashmir is conspicuously absent. It is Alberuni, who in his book *Kitab-ul-Hind* (1030 A.D.) gives a detailed and accurate account of the valley of Kashmir on the basis of his information which he collected during his long stay at Ghazna and in Punjab in 1017-30 A. D. He traces the course of the river Zhelum and speaks of Turkish tribes called Bhattavaryān inhabiting near Bāramūla gorge. He also makes references to fortress of Lauhur and Rajagiri. The former is identified by Stein as Loharakotta of Kalhana's *Rājatarangīnī*, which is known as Loharin in present times. Alberuni closes his geographical account of Kashmir with a reference of Rājawarī, which is Rājpurī of the chronicle. It was the capital of a hill state situated to the south of the Pīr-Panchāl range during Hindu reign. It was the farthest boundary across which the muslim traders of Alberuni's time did not go. In the *Ain-i Akbari*, Abūl-Fazl, minister in Akbar's court, has given a very accurate account of several holy places of the valley, popular at the end of the 16th century.

In modern times the northern state of India is known as Jammu and Kashmir which roughly lies between 32.17' to 36.58' N and 73.26' to 80.30' E. The ancient territory of Kashmir was much smaller than the present day state of Jammu and Kashmir.

The whole valley is surrounded by lofty mountains, interwoven with lovely lakes and rivers. In the east is Harmukhā, in the south is Mahādeo, the high range of Gwash Brari and the

Amaranāth. On the south-west is the Pīr-Panchāl range. Further north is the Toshmaidān and in the north-west is the Kājināg.

The mounteneous rampart played a major role in preserving the ancient cultural traditions. While other parts of India were invaded by foreigners, Kashmir remained unaffected by them. The Nīlamata throws light on the mounteneous defence of the region¹³. While Kalhaṇa says that 'this country may be conquered by the force of spiritual merits but not by forces of soldiers'¹⁴ The Sanskrit word 'Kukshau' used for the valley reveals its well-protected position¹⁵.

Thus the previlged geographical position of the valley not only provided immunity to foreign invasions but also created an undisturbed atmosphere for persuing various arts and learning. This segregation also helped in preserving the religious beliefs and superstitions till to day. In spite of the sophistication of the modern age, the people of Jammu and Kashmir are simple and god fearing.

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13. अघृष्यं पर राष्ट्राणां तद्भयानां कोविदाम् । v. 18 a.
14. यत्ताड्यंभीत्या प्राप्तानां नागानां गुप्तये घृवम् ।
प्रसादित भुजं पृष्ठे शैल प्राकार लीलया ॥ 1.31.
विवीयत्ते पुण्यवलैर्वलैर्यत्तु न शस्त्रिणाम् । 1,39,
15. R.T. 1.25.

Socio-Cultural Background

The culture of a country depends on the populace of which the society is composed of. The inhabitants of Kashmir valley are not a pure race. The people of Kashmir belong to different ethnic groups, which came from time to time and settled down in the valley. In due course they mixed up with one another. This is evident when we study the people of Kashmir and their culture. Different cultural trends and racial groups can be seen harmonised into one. It is true that the Valley had the privilege of natural fortification, still it could not escape foreign invasions. Its natural beauty, rich crop, pleasant climate and undisturbed serene

atmosphere have been a source of attraction to aliens, who sometimes came to enjoy, sometimes to meditate and sometimes to pursue higher knowledge. The various names given to it, are expressive of its variegated qualities. Consequently, inflow of all sorts of people, whether seeking wordly pleasure or intending to pursue higher aims of life, continued from time immemorial. The fortified position of the valley also provided shelter at the time of calamity in other parts of India. Thus the present day Kashmiri people and their culture are an amalgum of various regional and foreign elements.

The *Nīlamatapurāṇa* throws ample light on the early inhabitants of the valley. Accordingly, the valley was originally inhabited by the *Nāgas*. Later on the *Pisācas* and the descendents of *Manu* came to settle there. These *Nāgas* were the progeny of *Prajāpati Kashyapa*. From this account of the inhabitants, some scholars hold that the *Nāgas* were the aborigins inhabiting Kashmir and other northern regions of India before the advent of the *Āryans*. When these *Āryans* entered the land of seven rivers, they had to face a great opposition by them. But they were successful in pushing the original inhabitants to other parts of the country.

Waves of invasion continued in Kashmir. The valley was subjected to several invasions from the North and North-West directions from quite early times. The *Śakas* or the *Scythinas* entered the country in the 2nd cent. B. C.

From the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* it is clear that *Kuṣāṇas* subjugated the valley in the early centuries of the Christian era. It mentions the names of the *Kuṣāṇa* kings *Huṣka*, *Juṣka* and *Kaniṣka*—as having their sway over the valley. A large number of the *Kuṣāṇa* coins found in the valley corroborate the fact. The recent archeological discoveries in the *Gilgit-Hunja* areas suggest that the *Scytho-Pārthians* and the *Kuṣāṇas* occupied the area for sometime.

After the Kuṣāṇas, Kashmir came under the devastating influence of Tormāṇa, the Hūṇa chief and his son Mihirkula, the white skin Hūṇas, who invaded northern India in the 5th and 6th Cent. A. D. Hiuen Tsang has mentioned the reign of Mihirkula in Kashmir in his account of India. Kalhaṇa has also taken note of this alien class. Even such Kashmiri names as Tormāṇa, Vasukula, Hiranyakula etc. are examples of Hūṇa influence on Kashmiri people. The influx of these central Asian tribes left a mark on the sculpture obtained from Harwan. For sometime the Gurjaras were also held as aliens, who entered the valley.

From the side of Tibet, some people seem to have come and settled down in Kashmir. Prior to the entry of the Hūṇas, the Bhauttas were spread all over the valley as testified by Kalhana¹. Some religious teachers from Tibet also came to settle down here.

During the Mauryan rule people from north India migrated to Kashmir. This is evident from the Sanskritic culture of the valley. The recorded history shows that Kashmir was a part of the far flung empire of Chandragupta Maurya and his successors Vindusāra and Aśoka, who ruled for a century in the 4th and 3rd cent. B.C.² Even the Kūṣāṇa Kings, Kaniṣka and Huviṣka, whose kingdom extended to Kashgar, Yarkand and Khotan in Central Asia in 200 A. D. also occupied this region. After the Mauryan rule the influx of people from north India did not stop as Sanskrit language prevailed there. The ancestors of Abhinava Gupta and Bilhaṇa hailed from Madhya Deśa. Though this migrated population consisted of small section when compared with people already settled there, still it exercised a great influence on the religion and culture of the valley. No definite historical account is available about the origin and racial characteristics of this bulk of population already settled in the valley prior to Mauryan days.

From the literary sources, it is clear that from 6th to 13th cent. A.D., Kashmir was under the rule of local Hindu dynasties such as Karkotaka and Utpala, which derived their names from their ancestors, the early inhabitants of the valley.

The analysis of the linguistic components of Kashmiri language throw light on the ethnic composition of the populace of Kashmir. Though Kashmiri language has Sanskrit words, yet it is not basically Sanskrit. It belongs to the Dārdic group which branched off from the parent Āryan group. To support it, the word '*Kashmīrī*' can be taken. It is derived from Sanskrit '*Kaśmīrikā*', but actually Kashmir is called '*Kashīr*' and the language *Koshiri*. This word in itself is a good example of the fact that the language belongs to Dārdic sub-family. The Dārdic speaking people appear to have lived originally in the Pāmīra region, whence they migrated to Kashmir and developed the Kashmiri language. Thus the present Kashmiri language shows to some extent the characteristics of both the Indo-Āryan and the Irānian language. The Dārdic language was dubbed *Paiśācī* by the Indian grammarians. The present Kashmiri language also contains words of *Burushaski*, the language of the non-Āryan race of the same name. On the basis of it, some scholars regard the Burushaski people as the original inhabitants of the valley. They indentify the Nāgas, the original inhabitants of the Nīlamata-purāṇa, with the Burushaski, who were followed by the Piśācas and the sons of Manu, that is the Darad speaking people and the carriers of Sanskrit language and culture respectively.

Study of physical features of Kashmiris reveal that they originally belonged to Indo-Afghan⁴ or the Nordic group.⁵ These Indo-Afghans who infiltrated into Kashmir from Gilgit and Central Asia are identical with the ancestors of the Darad speaking tribes known as *Piśācas* in Sanskrit literature. According to scholars Indo-Afghans were the predominating race in the ancient

population of Kashmir. But some recent excavations near Burzahom, adjacent to Srinagar, have proved that the earliest inhabitants of the valley were the neolithic people who lived in pit like dwellings. The excavation has also thrown light on the material culture of these people during 3rd and 2nd millinia B. C.

Though the Kashmiri society is a patriarchal one, still women enjoyed a privileged position there. They were treated at par with men. The society paid great regards to them, is clear from indigenous literature. Unlike other Purāṇas, where they were regarded as the cause of degradation of man or the discoverer of the intellect of man⁶, the Nīlamata speaks higher of its women. They were quite free to move in society without veil and equally participated in rituals with their husbands. Women were at par with their counterparts in field and fun. They ploughed the fields and equally participated in dance and music. Even they were allowed to play in water with men⁷. Discussing the social position of women in the Purāṇas, R. C. Hazara accepts that Indian women had a secondary position in the field of religion and society⁸. Kashmiri writers like Kshemendra and others tell about the freedom of their women folk in the valley. They also excelled in the field of religion and politics. Lalleśwarī was a great saint in 14th Cent. A.D., while queen Diddā was known for her royal influence. This privileged position of women has a direct bearing on the socio-cultural life of Kashmir.

The epithet, '*Śaradapīṭha*' used for Kashmir, throws light on the educational status of the valley. Prior to Muslim invasion, Kashmir was equally famous as a centre of learning as Varanasi was in ancient times. There was a university in the valley which was as famous as the universities of Takshaśilā and Nālandā. In the words of Bilhaṇa⁹, Kashmira was "*Śardadeśa*", the land of the goddess of learning. The inhabitants also believed that goddess Śardā or Saraswatī actually resided there. Hence scholars from far off places used to visit Kashmir to quench their thirst of

knowledge. Even writers outside the valley believed that unless their literary works were not approved by the goddess Saraswatī, residing in the valley, it was not of high merit. Consequently, scholars from different parts of the country used to visit Kashmir for getting approval of the deity¹⁰. King Jayachandra of Kanyakubja asked his court-poet Sri Harsha, to get his epic, the Naishadha, approved by the goddess of learning. This has been mentioned in the introduction of the work¹¹. Even the women folk was well versed in Sanskrit language. It tells about the academic atmosphere in the valley¹². Because of the scholarship, the Kashmiris were awarded the title of '*Pandits*' (scholars) as late as in Muslim rule.

The geographical surroundings, provided a congenial atmosphere for the origin and development of various branches of learning. It accured the title of '*Sarvajñanapīṭha*' for it. Ancient relics, chronicles and the huge mass of literature on various subjects are a good example to prove that Kashmir had been a seat of learning in ancient times. The variety of literature produced here presents a vivid picture of intellectual superiority of Kashmir. In the field of education and learning it could be compared with Vāranasi, Valabhī, Takshaśila and other seats of learning in the country. The credit goes to the Himalayas, which protected the valley and provided serene atmosphere for the pursuit of knowledge.

Of the various branches of knowledge, a few need special mention. In the field of poetry, Kashmir excelled. Sage Kaśyapa, the creator of the valley, is mentioned as an authority on Metrics and Dramaturgy in the Agnipurāṇa. The Hridayaṅgam, a commentary on Daṇḍī's Kāvyaadarsha, informs us that Kaśyapa and Vararuchi had composed works on poetics prior to the Kāvyaadarsha of Daṇḍī. References are there mentioning Kaśyapa as the formulator of certain rules in poetics, which were elaborated by Kashmiri writers later on and thus leading poetics to perfect

science. Consequently, the *Rasa* and *Dhvani* theories have their origin in Kashmir. The names of Udbhata, Mammat, Vaman, Rudrata, Anandavardhana and Abhinavagupta could not be forgotten in the field of poetics, who took thread from the Agnipurāṇa and Bharata's Nāṭyashāstra and developed various theories in the field of poetics. Bhaṭṭa Nayaka, Kuntal and Mahimbhaṭṭa had their independent views on poetry. Thus various schools in the field of poetics have their birth in Kashmir.

Just as talented rhetoricians became erudite philosophers in Kashmir, similarly, gifted poets turned their attention towards the recording of historical events of their region. Though the number of such poet-historians is quite small and the historical facts are burried under poetic and didactic elements, still historical element is not lacking in their writings. They are historians in a different sense than what is meant to-day by a historian. Thus Bilhaṇ, Kalhaṇa are the originators of historical tradition in Kashmir, followed by Jonarāja, Śrīvara, Prājyabhaṭṭa and Śuka, who present a continuous and vivid historical account of the valley, from its very birth to modern period. Sumptuous material is available in their writings for socio-cultural study of the valley.

From Kalhaṇa's Rājatarāṅgiṇī, it is evident that grammatical science has a long tradition in Kashmir. He refers to an edition of the Mahabhāṣya and writing up of a grammar after consulting the works of Chandracharya and others.¹³ King Jayapīḍa brought from abroad competent expositors and thus restored in his own country the study of the Mahābhāṣya which had been interrupted. The king himself mastered the science of grammar from Kshīra, a popular teacher of the subject in Kashmir. Thus we see that the need to explain the grammatical rules and the relation between word and meaning was felt in Kashmir as early as in 400 A.D. Grammarians like Chandra, Jayāditya, Vāman and others tried their best to present a clear analysis and explanation of the intricate rules of Sanskrit grammar.

In the field of philosophy, Kashmir excelled. Before the visit of Ādi Śaṅkarāchārya all the fine schools of Indian philosophy, the heterogeneous systems like Jain and Bauddha and the Grammarian school flourished here. Scholars well versed in their philosophical systems were proud of their scholarship in their particular fields¹⁴. Śaṅkara had to prove his mastery over these philosophical schools of thought prior to his ascent on the *Sarvajñānapiṭh*. The Śaṅkaravijaya is silent about Śaivism as philosophy in the valley. It mentions other systems of philosophy, but not a single reference is there to a scholar who might be well-versed in Śaiva philosophy. It is true that Śaiva cult was there as is accorded by archeological remains. Even Advaita philosophy, was not there. It is after the visit of Śaṅkara, that Advaita thought entered the valley and the Purāṇic Śaiva religion was provided with a philosophic base. The harmonising approach of Śaṅkara led to the birth of Advaita Śaivism, also known as Kashmir Śaivism. It is a monastic system on the model of Advait Vedānta. It flourished in the valley during 8th cent A. D. to 13th Cent. A.D. Scholars like Vasugupta, Somananda, Utpal, Abhinavagupta, Kshemraja and others appeared on the scene during the said period and gave a systematic form to the prevalent Śaiva religion.

Performing arts, namely music, dance and drama also developed in this region. The patronage of ruling chiefs and other influential sections of society gave impetus to the advancement of these fine arts which is corroborated by literary references.

In the field of architecture and plastic art we find a great deal of progress during the early medieval period. Monuments in the forms of temples, stūpas, monastries, religious and secular sculptures testify it.

Thus we see that prior to Muslim rule, Kashmir was not only a pleasure spot but was famous for its learning. It was

Śārdāpīṭha in the true sense of the term. Women were equally learned. Scholars from distant part of the country like Bengal and Madhya Deśa used to visit Kashmir to quench their thirst of knowledge. In 10th Cent. A.D., during the reign of Yashaskara, it was a centre of higher studies. Yashaskara built a *Maṭha* for foreign students, to facilitate them in their studies. The valley provided Buddhism a large number of logicians who attached themselves with Diaganaga and Dharmakīrti. The approval of Kashmiri Paṇḍits was sought in the field of literary creation. Thus from times immemorial, Kashmir was a centre of learning in various branches of knowledge. As regards studies in Tantra, they found a congenial atmosphere in the valley for its development.

The geographical conditions not only helped in the enhancement of learning, but had a direct learning on the festivals of the valley which were related with such natural phenomena as blooming of flowers and fruits and snowfall.

The food habits of the people are conditioned by the cold climate and religious sanctity is given to meat-eating and drinking on new snowfall day¹⁵. References are there where even Brahmins were allowed to consume liquor¹⁶ and take meat. They regarded it as *Deśajaguna*, a habit related to particular place and climate. Even non-vegeterian food was offered to deities.

People who came to settle down in Kashmir named, many beautiful places of Kashmir according to their familiar holy places. Thus the confluence of river Vitastā and Sindhu was named as Prayāga. The area extending from Trikoti Saṅgam to Ranapyeśvara Hara and from the confluence of the Pāvanā and the Rajoviduvīnirmalā to Cīramocana, as the holy Vārānasī. Many holy places and rivers of Kashmir are named according to various *thīrthas* of India. Saraswatī; Rishikulyā, Rāmhrīda, Bhṛīgutunga, Citrakūta, Kāmatīrtha and Kotitīrtha are some of the examples¹⁷.

Thus the culture of Kashmir is a composite one in which strands of other cultures are interwoven from time to time.

REFERENCE

1. R.T.I., 312.
2. Ibid. I. 101-107.
3. G. A. Grierson, *The Linguistic Survey of India* Vol. VIII Pt. II.
4. Haddon, *The Races of Man*, p. 86.
5. B. S. Guha, *Racial Element in the Population* pp. 23-26.
6. नराणां बुद्धिं कवलं कुर्वन्ति सततं हिताः । *Padma Purāṇa* LXI. V 14; 1-40
7. सुहृद्भाषायाश्चितैः सार्धं वाचशब्दैर्मनोहरैः।
उत्सवं चैव कर्तव्यं गीतनृत्त समाकुलम् ॥ 1-40. *The Nīlamatā* v. 547.
क्रीडितव्यं विशेषेण कुमारिभिस्तथा जले । *Ibid.* v. 714.
8. *Great women of India*, pp. 221-22.
9. *Vikramāṅka Devacarita*, I. 21.
10. Kshemendra, *Deshopadesha*. VI. Alberuni, *India* p. 135.
11. *Naishadha*, Ed. Sivadatta p. 324.
12. *Vikramāṅka Devacarita*, XVIII. 6.
13. R.T., I. 146.
14. Vyasachala, *Sankarvijaya* Ch. XII.
15. नवो मद्यस्तु पातव्यो मद्यपैः पतिते हिमे *The Nīlamatā* v. 481.
16. मद्यं तु मद्यपैः पेयं ब्राह्मणैः पानकाः शुभाः । *Ibid.* v. 542.
17. *Ibid.* 306-307; 1301-1327.

Religious Background to Saiva - Cult

From hoary antiquity Kashmir has been a land of holy sites. Reflecting on its religious richness Kalhana says, "There is not a space as large as Sesamum without a *tīrth*". Even in Alberuni's time Kashmir was held as holy a place as Vārāṇasī or Kurukshetra.

On literary evidences some Western scholars like Stein and others hold the view that the earliest inhabitants of the valley cherished some aboriginal beliefs, though details are not traceable at present. The source of such beliefs is the Nilamatā Purana, where the original inhabitants of the valley are said to be the

Nāgas and the Piśācas. These scholars identify them as aboriginals and to support their view, they take recourse to linguistics.

The Naga-Cult

Accepting the Nāgas as aboriginals, the scholars hold snake cult or Nāga-cult as the earliest religion of Kashmir, though the exact period of it can not be ascertained. In the *Mahāvamśa*, it is said that when Aśoka's advisor Mogaliputta Tissā sent Majjhāntika for propagating Buddhism in the valley, he found Arvāl, the Nāga king ruling there. He was impressed by the Buddhist monk and accepted Buddhism along with his followers. This resulted in the conversion of Nāga-worshippers into the new religion². Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim who visited the valley in the 7th cent. A.D. also confirms the above view on the basis on native records. Thus Nāga-cult is held to be the most ancient religion in Kashmir prior to the advent of Buddhism there. The *Nīlamata Purāṇa*, a work of 7th and 8th cent. A.D., throwing light on the origin of the valley, tells us that in the beginning, Nīla, the chief on the Nāgas and the son of Kaśyapa, ruled the valley. It is only after being pleased with Chandradeva, a Brahmin, that he allowed the sons of Manu to stay in the valley throughout the year. He also laid down a code of conduct regarding the worship of various popular deities, including the Nāgas. Thus on first snowfall or *Irāmanjarīpūjā*. Nīla along with other local deities and Nāgas received worship³. The book also records names of principal Nāgas worshipped in the valley. The total number of which was five hundred and twenty seven. Nāga temples and the names of such places as *Vernāga*, *Anantanāga* show the antiquity of Nāga-cult in the valley.

The *Rājatarāṅginī*, which incorporates the views of the *Nīlamata*, testifies the Nāga-worship in Kashmir. It further adds that even after the introduction of Buddhism and undermining of Nāga-cult, King Gonard III reintroduced the Nāga-worship⁴. References to Naga kings are also there in the chronicle⁵. Even

in honour of serpent king Takshaka, a festival was organised⁶. The *Samayamātrikā* or Kshemendra also refers to it.

Prevalence of Nāga-cult in Kashmir through out the Hindu rule and even afterwards is testified by Abul-Fazal. He mentions the number of places dedicated to the worship of various Hindu dieties, including Śiva, Viṣṇu, Brahmā, and Durgā. The places where images of snakes were carved and worshipped excelled others.⁶ The images of snakes in their original form and human form are found there.

Nāga-worship is not only confined to Kashmir or India but was prevalent in other parts of the world such as Egypt, Greece, China, Japan and Arab. In India serpents have a prominent place in religion since early times. Mohenjodaro seals show human devotees with hooded nāgas behind them.⁷ On the basis of the antiquity of Nāga-cult and language of the Nāgas⁸, scholars, western as well as eastern, regard it as non-Āryan⁹. But there are others who regard these Nāgas as the descendent of the Āryan race¹⁰. Here one should think over the name of the father of Nāga king Nala. He is called as Kaśyapa. This name is not non-Āryan one. Moreover, new archeaological excavations have proved that the Indus valley culture was a part of Āryan culture¹¹. If this is true, the serpent-worship is basically Āryan. Such hypothesis are based on the historical myth of the theory of Āryan exodus, propounded by the western scholars on the basis of their own history and ignorance failing to understand the true meaning and purpose of the Vedic symbology.

Reference is there to the worship of Kubera, the lord of *Yakṣas* and the giver of wealth. He is remembered by his two names, *Dhanada* and *Vaiśrāvaṇa*¹². He is a friend of Śiva and the Nāga Nīla. It is said that six images of Kubera were erected, by the sages¹³. The Nāga and the *Yakṣa* workshop was quite popular at the time of advent of Buddhism in the valley.

The Vaisnava-cult

The Vaiṣṇava-cult seems to exist in the valley from very early times, but its origin and early character could not be traced in the absence of solid proofs. In the Viṣṇudharmottara Purāṇa, Kashmir is said to be Viṣṇu, the Cakrin¹⁴. The Nīlamata describes Viṣṇu, as the highest god praised by Brahmā and Śiva. He is described as creator of the world, protector of his devotees and destroyer of the Dānavas. A vivid description of his personality along with his weapons is found there. Not only this, the various incarnations of Viṣṇu are mentioned in the book and Buddha is said to be one of them. The worship of Viṣṇu in accordance with *Pañcrātra* system and honouring of the Bhagvatas clearly indicate the influence of the two cult on Kashmir. Eating of meat was prohibited during five day worship even for the *Piśācās* and the *Dānavas*. Temples erected in honour of Viṣṇu were named after their builder but ended with *Swāmin* or *Keshavā*. While the names of the temples of Śiva ended with *Īśa* or *Īś'wara*.

The Rajatarāṅgiṇī testifies the erection of Viṣṇu temples by kings and their relatives, Pravarsena II, who ruled in the later half of the 6th cent. A.D., built a temple of Viṣṇu, known as *Jayaswāmin*¹⁵. *Ramāditya* erected an image of Viṣṇu, *Raṇaswāmin*, near Pravarpur. With the accession of the Karakotas to the throne of Kashmir in 7th cent. A.D. Viṣṇu predominance over other deities as the Karakotas were Vaishnavities. Many temples such as *Malhanaswāmin*, *Durlabhaswāmin* and *Tribhuvanswāmin* were built by the members of royal families. King *Lalitāditya* was also a staunch devotee of Viṣṇu. He built a glorious image of silver of *Parihāsakeśava*¹⁶, which when flooded with the light of pearls shine like Viṣṇu lying in ocean. Viṣṇu as *Govardhana-dhara* and his *vāhana*, *Garuḍa* were his favourite. His wife and son also built temples of Viṣṇu.

Worship of Viṣṇu continued in the valley till 13th cent. A. D. as testified from the *Rājatarāṅgiṇī* of Jonaraja. Thus the

Vaisnava cult prevalent in Kashmir in ancient times was that of the Purāṇa intermingled with Pancarātra and absorbing Buddhism of later origin into it.

In his Rājatarāṅgiṇī, Kalhaṇa gives a detailed description of three Viṣṇu temples built by Hīndu kings. Though many of them had been raised to the ground by invaders. Yet some are identified by A. Stein. Accordingly Padma, the minister of Lalitaditya, founded the town of Padmapur, modern Pampur in 9th cent. A.D. and built a temple of Padmaswāmin there. At the top of the *Uḍar*, temple of Cakradhara Viṣṇu was built. In Ushkar, Lalitāditya built the temple called Muktaswamin. The Awantiswāmin Viṣṇu temple was built by Avanti. Here the consorts of Viṣṇu, Laxmī and Bhūmī, are also carved besides him. On the walls of the temple figures of Gaṅgā and Yamunā with their *vāhanas* are depicted. Thus we see that Veisṇva-cult is quite ancient in Kashmir which continued in the later period of the Hindu rule. This is also confirmed by archaeological facts.

Saiva-cult

Another god who is at par with Viṣṇu is Śiva. He is associated with the origin of the valley and is said to have raised the sun and the moon and thus dispelled the darkness, created by the demon, Jalodbhava¹⁷. The legend throws light on the antiquity of Śaiva-cult in the valley. He is one of the trio of deities. He is also accepted as originator, sustainer and destroyer of the world, with his three kinds of bodies made of three *guṇas*¹⁸. He is described as personal god, having matted hair with lunar crescent and *Gaṅgā*. His *Ardhanārīśwara* form is to also referred crescent. The whole world is stated to be his eight forms. He is also associated with *Piśācas* as he is called the lord of *Bhūtas*. Still he remains unaffected by his creation like a witness or lotus.

Kaśyapa, the father of Nīla, the Nāga, is said to have worshipped Śaṅkara and induced Umā, his consort, to purify his

country by the gift of water. The river Vitastā is no other than Umā. As Śankara brought out Satī from the nether world with the stroke of his spear, she is called *Vitastā*. In the *Nīlamata* the symbol of Śiva as *linga* and ritualistic details of his worship are there.

Various names of Śiva and mythological stones of *Purāṇa* connected with these names are referred to in the *Nīlamata*. Iconographic features of the deity found in the *Śiva Purāṇa* are also found in the said *Purāṇa*. Śiva is praised by Śakra with adjectives, which reveal the metaphysical character of Śiva. By his three kinds of bodies, he is said to be the creator, the sustainer, and the destroyer of the world. He is *Tripurāntaka*, the destroyer of the demon *Tripura* or the three kinds of human bodies which bind the soul. He is Śankara, the provider of peace and prosperity¹⁹. In the *Kuttanimata* of Damodargupta references are there to the various names of Śiva with iconographical details²⁰. All this throw light on the popularity of Śaiva-cult in the mediaval period.

The family members of Śiva are also mentioned in the *Nīlamata Purāṇa*. The name of Gaṇeśa occurs twice there. But frequent mention is made to his other name *Vināyaka*. This shows the popularity of *Vināyaka* over *Gaṇeśa*. Eighteen places sacred to *Gaṇeśa* or *Vinayaka* are also referred to in the *Purāṇa*.

The other son of Śiva called *Skanda* or *Kārttikeya* was also worshipped in ancient Kashmir. But *Skanda* and *Kumāra* names were more common than *Kārttikeya*. In the *Nīlamata* he is shown as a deity of children than a battle-leader²¹. *Śakha*, *Viśākha* and *Naigameśa* form a part of the pantheon of *Skanda*. The places were dedicated to the worship of *Skanda*.

Details about Śiva and his family found in the *Nīlamata* are a clear indication of the popularity of Śaiva-cult in the valley. But reference to any Śaiva-sect is lacking there. Even treatises

entitled Śivadharmas are referred there to, which might be containing ritualistic details of Śiva-worship.

The popularity of Śaiva-cult in the valley is not an uncommon phenomenon. This cult is quite ancient and was popular in many parts of the country is confirmed by the coins of Kuāṣṇa rulers. Vīma Kadphises was called as '*Paramamāheśvara*' is clear from the coins issued by him. Similarly, on the coins of Kaniska and others, Śiva along with his bull is depicted. Even foreign invaders Śaka and Hūṇa could not escape the influence of Śaiva-cult. On a slab, obtained from Mathura (No. 2261), a *Śiva-linga* worshipped by the Śakas in their typical dress is depicted, *Mukha-lingas* belonging to Kuṣāṇa and Gupta periods also corroborate the antiquity of this cult. Worship of Śiva with his wife Pārvatī or Umā and other members of his family such as Gaṇeśa universe and Karttikeya in human forms is quite ancient as proved by the images found from Mathura and other areas of Brijā.

Historical evidences reveal that Mathura was an important centre of Śaiva worship from 2nd cent. A. D. to 14th cent A. D. along with Bhāgavata cult. Even the art of icon making had its birth here. Image of Hindu gods and goddesses were built in large number during 2nd to 12th cent. A. D. Kama in district Bharatpur, Rajasthan, was also well known for icon-making during early mediaval period²¹, from where this art spread in other parts of India and also had its entrance in Kashmir valley. Even the Mahābhārata categorically states that Śiva and Umā be propitiated in Kashmir at the lake of Vātikaṣaṇḍa²². Kalhaṇa's Rājatarīngiṇī contains innumerable references to Śiva and his images erected by kings and others in Kashmir. Even the Nīlamata is not silent on Śiva-worship in the valley. From the above discussion it is clear that the Puranic Śaiva-cult, along with Viṣṇu-cult was popular all over India and a feeling of religious tolerance was there, Kashmir was not an exception to it. Even Aśoka, a follower of Buddhism, replaced the old stuccoed enclosure of Vijayeśwara

temple by a new one and also erected two new temples of Śiva. He is said to have a son by the grace of Bhūteśa²³.

Here a word about Rudra-Śiva controversy would not be out of place. Since Harppan culture is now been regarded as urban culture of the Āryans, the said controversy does not hold water. Moreover, it proves the antiquity of Śaiva-cult. Mythological stories of the epics and the Purāṇas, woven around the various names of Śiva, elaborate the abstract concepts of the Vedas. It is in this sense that the Purāṇas fall under the *Aitehya* tradition of Vedic interpretation and are a part of Vedic tradition²⁴. The often quoted story of the destruction of Daksha's sacrifice by Śiva, to support the struggle between Āryans and non-Āryans, by the supporters of the theory of the Āryan exodus, throws light on the conflict between the *Jñānamārgins* and the *Karmamārgins* as is clear from the commentaries of Śaṅkara and Rāmānuja as well as from the famous debate between Śaṅkara and Maṇḍan Mīśra. Comments of Dr. Radhakrishnan on the nature and purpose of the Purāṇas are worth quoting here. He says, 'The Purāṇas contain the truth dressed up in myths and stories to suit the weak understanding of the majority. The hard task of interesting the multitude in metaphysics is achieved in India (by the Purāṇas)'²⁵. Not only this, even idols of deities are made according to the descriptions of these deities in the Purāṇas to grossify the abstract metaphysical concepts of the Vedas. Thus the Purāṇas are a kind of visual aids, a revised and easy version of the ancient difficult texts, which are in harmony with the Vedic tradition.

These western scholars approached Indian culture and thought with their selfish ecclesiastical and political motives²⁶. Hence their interpretations and opinions are not objective. Panper in spiritual field and with the theory of evolution in their land, they tried to trace evolution in Indian culture and thought on the basis of literal meaning of these various texts and hence failed to see the continuity of thought from the Vedas to the Purāṇas, through

symbols underlying mythical stories. Unfortunately, some of our Indian scholars have followed the foot-steps of these western teachers in the name of modernity. Now the archaeologists of India, who once supported the theory of Aryan exodus, are coming to the conclusion, on the basis of archaeological remains that Āryans were not invaders but belonged to India²⁷ and Śiva was not the god of the non-Aryans who was later on identified with Rudra, the god of the Āryana²⁸. Even *Śiva-linga* does not belong to non-Āryans. It is symbolic in nature and *avyakta* or unmanifested form of Śiva. Worship of Śiva in the form of *linga* or phallus is quite ancient and world-wide phenomenon. At the time of Indus valley civilization, Śiva was worshipped in the form of *linga*. Even in Greek and Rome culture proofs of *linga* worship are found. It was known as *Priyepus* (phallus). In China and Japan its worship was popular, is proved by the ancient literature of these countries. On the basis of Śiva's worship in the form of *linga*, nearly all over the world, some scholars do not accept the theory of labelling Śiva and *linga* with non-Āryan god. One can see development in icon-making from unmanifested forms of deities to manifested forms as the subtle concepts of the *Śrut* evolved into stories in the *Purāṇas*.

The problem of Śiva and *linga* as non-Āryan centres round three things contributed by the west. Number one, the theory of Āryan's invasion, number two, the application of the theory of evolution in the field of religion and lastly, cutting religion as under from philosophy.

The history of Śaiva-cult in Kashmir valley goes to the remote past. When this cult was introduced there is shrouded in mystery. Reference is there in the *Mahābhārata* to the propitiation of Śiva and *Umā* in Kashmir, the emergence of valley from *Satīśara* testifies the antiquity of the cult there. Going through the *Nīlamata* one can easily comprehend the form of Śaiva-cult prevalent there. Here śiva is referred to as a member of the trio of deities²⁹. He performs the three acts related with the world. He is eulogised by-*Śakra* and reminds us of the description of Śiva in the *Śiva Purāṇa*.

Even many names and mythological legends found in the Purāṇas about Śiva, are also referred to in the Nīlamata³⁰. In the Rājatarāṅgīnī, he is said to be a personal god, bestowing prosperity and salvations. The prevalence of Śaiva-cult among the masses is confirmed by the fact that most of the indigenous writers commenced their works with salutation to Śiva along with his wife.

Śiva-worship continued in the valley is testified by Kalhaṇa. Even before Aśoka there was a Śiva temple, *Vijayeśa*, in the valley³¹. Aśoka was also a devotee of Śiva and he built two temples then called *Aśokeśwara* and *Bhuteśa*. While his son Jalauka also erected several temples of Śiva. The first three books of the Rājatarāṅgīnī are full of details about Śiva temples erected by various kings, such as Damodara II, Hūṇa chief Mihirkula, Pravarsena I and II and others. Kings of Karakota and Utpal dynasties in 7th and 8th century A.D. patronised Śiva-worship and built several temples in honour of this deity. In succeeding years Śiva remained the prominent deity in the valley and Śiva temples were built by kings and their family members. Queen Narendraprabha built a śiva temple called Narendreśwara. Her son, Lalitāditya, erected a lofty temple, Jyestharudra and his minister installed a *Śiva-linga* called Mitreśwara. After the 7th cent. A.D., this cult spread all over India. In the inscriptions, references are there to two sects namely the *Pāśupata* and the *Kāpālika*. The former sect was popular in the valley is known through the Kuttani mata. The Rājatarāṅgīnī also corroborates it.

The Devi-cult

Apart from male deities, goddesses also occupied an important place in the pantheon of gods. Among these, Umā, the female consort of Śiva, occupied an important place, even higher to her husband. Along with her husband she is also associated with the origin of the valley, which indicates the antiquity of Devī-worship in the valley. Like many other goddesses who have turned

into various rivers in Kashmir, Umā has changed herself into Vitastā, a major river of the valley. Even Kashmir is said to be her material manifestation.

Puranic legends are associated with Umā in the Nīlamata. She is the daughter of the Himalaya and was dark complexioned in the beginning but became fair after observing penance on a mountain peak, which was later on named as *Gaurīśaṅkara*. She was worshipped under various names such as Durgā, Śyāmā, Satī, Bhadrakālī, etc. on various occasions such as *Mahāṣṭamī*, *Mahānavamī*, etc. These various goddesses are no other but Śakti, the power of Śiva. Where worshipped as Durgā, animals were offered in sacrifice. In the form of Śāradā, she was the most celebrated deity of the valley in ancient times. After her name it was known as *Śāradadeśa*. Frequent references are there to *Mātṛkācakra* in the *Rājtarāṅgiṇī* and sculptured images of *Saptamatrikas*, such as Brāhmi, Māheśvarī, Kumārī, Vaiṣṇavī, etc. have been recovered from Pandarethan³³. The archaeological remains obtained from various places in Kashmir, such as Gandharbal, Cakreswara, Fatahkadal, Khru, Hindawara are good proofs of the prevalence of Śakti-cult in the valley. Even to-day Kshirābhavani and Vaishno-devi are important places of Śakti, where thousands of pilgrims visit every year.

Other minor goddesses whose sculptures are found here are Laxmi, the goddess of wealth, who was quite popular during the reign of Pravarṣen II. He constructed five shrines in her honour. A Brahmin, called Rakka, also raised an image of goddess Śrī, known as Rakkajayā devī. Goddesses Gangā and Yamunā, with their *Vāhanas*, are also found among the ancient sculptures. From the literary accounts and archaeological remains, it is evident that Śakti-cult was no less important in the valley. But it did not emerge as an independent cult, supported by a distinct philosophy as we find in the case of Śaivism. Though there are devotees of Śakti in the valley to-day, known as *Kaula*, still their deity is the

spouse of Śiva. The statue of Ardhanārīśwara, found in Nara village, is a clear indication of the merging of the two-cults.

Apart from the worship of Śiva, Viṣṇu, Devī and others. Sūrya-worship was also popular in the valley in ancient days. In the Rājtaranginī reference is there to the Mārtanda temple erected by Ranaditya. In 8th cent A.D., Lalitaditya built a shrine of Āditya at Lalitapur. He also erected another temple of Sun, which is in delapidated condition. The worship of Sun continued in the valley even after Lalitaditya, is clear from the Rājtaranginī, where succeeding kings are mentioned as building Sun-temples, abstaining of the greedy king Harsa, from plundering the image of Mārtanda shows the popularity and respect to the deity³⁴.

One thing should be noted here while studying the religion of Kashmir. Though Śiva and Viṣṇu enjoyed an important place among other deities, still the feeling of animosity was absent there. There were festivals when both the deities were worshipped, Even the rulers erected temples of different deities, inspite of their adherence to a particular religion. A good example are the Vaisnavite Karakotas, who also built Śaiva shrines.

From the foregoing it is clear that apart from minor deities, the main deities were Śiva, Viṣṇu, Sūrya, Gaṇeśa and Śakti, the famous *pancadeva* of Indian religion. A panoramic survey of the deities of Kashmir proves that Brahmanic religion as propounded by the Purāṇas, was ancient religion of the valley. Religious practices were also taken from the Purāṇas and the Tantras. A harmonious current of religious ideas flowing from the Vedas to the Purāṇas can easily be detected,

The religion of Kashmir was a part of Indian religion, is clear from the fact that the valley has its own Prayāga at the confluence of Vitastā and Sindhu rivers and its own Kurukshetra. It entered the valley with the migration of people from the various parts of India.

The broad canvas of Puranic religion provided a very congenial atmosphere for Kashmir Saivism to emerge in the valley in 8th cent. A.D. The present Kashmir philosophy has its roots in the Puranic and Tantric religion and practices, prevalent in the valley in distant past, which entered the valley from other parts of the country. Thus the religion depicted in the *Nīlamata* is not different from Puranic religion, where various deities are worshipped. Even the *śaiva-cult* as described in the *Nīlamata*, is not a pure one but is a mixed religious cult, with the predominance of *Śaiva-cult*.

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19. *Ibid* 1114 ff.
20. *The Kuttanimata*, 18, 635, 738, 131, 241, 195.
21. K. D. Bajpai, *Braja kī Itihāsa*, Part II.
22. *The Mahābhārata*, III 130-13.
23. R. T., I 105-107.
24. Śruti Smṛti Purāṇābhyām Vedārtham upbringhayeta.
25. *Indian Philosophy*. Vol. I, p. 25.

26. "You know for how many years I have watched your efforts to purify the popular religion of India, and thereby to bring it near to purity and perfection of other religions particularly, of Christianity."

—From Max Muller's letter addressed to N. K. Mazumdar in 1899.

"No Hindu, who have received the English education, ever remains sincerely attached to his religion".

—From Macaulay's letter dated Oct. 12, 1836 addressed to his father.

27. 'The Pahargarh cave paintings said to belong to the stone Age, have been dated back to 23000 B.C. According to Dr. Dwarikesh, the paintings go a long way to prove in many ways that Aryans were not foreigners who came here from Central Asia as is generally believed but were a race belonging to India.

—Paintings prove Aryans' Indian origin.

The Hindustan times, 15th Sept., 1981.

28. Ramchandra Dixitar, 'Śaivamata ki Prācīntā. Śrī Śivanka, Kalyāṇa (Hindi)

29. *The Nīlamata* 175-1988.

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Buddhism in Kashmir

Since Buddhism occupied an important place before the emergence of Kashmir Śaivism, it requires a separate treatment.

Historians hold different views regarding the birth of Buddhism. According to them, upto 5th cent. B. C. Brahminic religion flourished all over the country. It is in the 6th cent. B.C. that Buddhism came into existence. The reason for its birth, the historians attribute to class conflict. According to them it came into existence as a reaction against the ritualistic predominance and intellectual supremacy of the Brahmin class¹. Hence the Kshatriyas

of King Janaka's time asserted their equality with Brahmins in the field of learning and spirituality, which later on led to the birth of Buddhism. An underlying attempt to throw off the supremacy of priestly class and preach the equality of man is perceived by such scholars. But such views can not be accepted. It is true, that some Kshatriyas gained supremacy after the great war, but it does not prove the point. If class-conflict be attributed for the birth of Buddhism, then the followers of it should also be Kshatriyas. No doubt, Gautāma Buddha the originator of Buddhism, was a Kshatriya, but because of class conflict he preached a new religion could not be believed, nor his religion be accepted as exclusively for the Kshatriyas and anti-Brahminism. Had it been for the Kshatriyas only, Brahmin scholars like Nāgārjuna and Aśhwaghōṣa would not have joined it. It is regarded as anti-Brahmanism because it challenged the authority of the Vedas and avoided metaphysical questions. But that was the need of the day. The increasing ritualism and rigidity in Brahminic religion could not be minimised without taking resort to reasoning. Thus in the beginning Buddhism was more a religious reform, than a mere religion. Ritualism overloaded with animal sacrifices paved the way for it. Moreover, the period of 7th and 6th Cent. B. C. is important in the history of religion in India. A growing disregard for the rigidity of Vedic sacrifices and a ferment for true knowledge could be perceived during this period. A kind of intellectual awakening was taking place before the birth of Buddha. Diversity of thoughts in the form of sacrificial *karma*, Upaniṣadic propoundings regarding Brahmanā, the nihilistic approach to life, the accidental theory about the origin of the world and *yoga* practices bereft of rational explanation, were some of the factors responsible for the emergence of Buddhism. Prof. Dasgupta has rightly remarked, "It was at this juncture that we find Buddha erecting a new superstructure of thought on altogether original lines which thenceforth opened up a new avenue of philosophy for all posterity to come"².

To propagate this new religion, Buddhist scholars used various devices ranging from music to missionaries. Even royal patronage was sought not only for its survival but for its propagation. Consequently, it spread far and wide in India and also crossed the boundaries of the country.

Regarding the entrance of Buddhism in the valley, scholars hold different views, but the exact time of its entrance is not known. It is in Ceylonese chronicle, the *Mahāvamsa*³, and the Tibetan *Dul-va*⁴ (*Vinaya Piṭaka*), that earliest records of its entrance in the valley are preserved. According to the *Mahāvamsa* Moggaliputta Tissa, the religious advisor of Aśoka, sent missionaries to different parts of India. Majjhantika was deputed by him as a missionary to Kashmir-Gandhara. Moggaliputta Tissa was a *Sihavirvādin*. He refuted the doctrine of *Saravāstivāda* and caused its supporters to flee to Kashmir. A few inscriptions dating from 2nd cent. A. D. to 4th cent. A. D. attest the presence of the *Sarvāstivāda* in Peshawara, Kashmir, Mathura and Sarnath. The Chinese records and inscriptions, also confirm the presence of *Sarvāstivāda* in the extreme north-west, including Kashmir.

It is said that after six hundred years of Buddha's demise Kātyāniputra, a *Sarvāstivādin*, went to Kashmir, with a large number of followers and collected material from the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* and wrote a commentry on it called the *Vibhāsa*. This commentry was so famous that Visubhandhu went Kashmir to study it and brought it to Ayodhya. Even Aśvaghōṣa from Saket was called to give it a literary form known as *Abhidharmamahāvibhāsā gāstra*. The whole incident proves the popularity of the *Sarvāstivāda* Buddhism in Kashmir prior to the Christian era. There is a reference in the *Mahāvamsa*, where Majjhantika so much impressed of Nāga king by his boldness that the later accepted Buddhism with his followers. This may be taken as the introduction of Buddhism in the valley. The *Rajataranginī* also tells us that Kashmir-Gandhara continued to be illumined by yellow

roles, that is Buddhists monks. The supernatural power of these people helped them in converting the inhabitants of the valley who were Nāga-worshippers. The tradition preserved in the Buddhist texts regarding the entrance of this religion in the valley, finds supports from the Nīlamata Purāṇa and the Rājtarāṅgiṇī, Kalhaṇa accepts the conversion of Nāga-worshippers to Buddhism⁵ and the existence of *Baudha-vihāras* even before the reign of Aśoka. Moreover, inviting of Buddhist missionaries from Kashmir by Aśoka to participate in his religious council could only be possible, if this religion was well established there.

Main reasons for the introduction of Buddhism in the valley may be attributed to the geographical conditions of the valley as well as the high intellectual level of its inhabitants. Calm and peaceful atmosphere, well guarded by the mountaneous rampart attracted Buddhist monks to contemplate and mediate. They could also move towards Central Asia and China through the silk route, known from early times. The religious conditions also helped these monks to spread their religion. The religion of the valley, prior to Buddhism was polythesitic with an inclination towards ritualistic Saivism. It was purely a faith based on Puranic religion, where philosophic current was either completely hidden or forgotten. Thus a strong foundation to this religion in the valley was lacking. All these factors worked together for the entrance of Buddhism in the valley. In the words of N. Dutt⁶ the evangelical spirit of the Buddhist monks was a vital factor in the spread of Buddhism. They generally selected, as their field of activities, those places where cultured religious beliefs has not yet secured a firm footing. Kashmir, therefore, along with its neighbouring regions. Offered in those early days a fruitful field to the Buddhist missionaries backed, as they were, by emperor Aśoka. Thus taking advantage of the religions situation and hiding their purpose well, the Buddhist entered the valley. K. C. Pandey observes "But so wise was then the way in which Buddhism was spread so noninterfering was the religions policy

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and so judicious was the royal patronage of different religions that Brahmanas did not very much feel the advent of the new religion"⁷ Philosophic vacuum and love of knowledge of the Kashmir's paved the way for spreading Buddhism in the valley. Great scholars of Kashmir accepted this new religion with open arms. A large of logicians attached with Dingnaga and Dharmakīrti belonged to Kashmir. We find a series of Kashmiri monks, with scholarship at their credit, as teachers of Buddhism and translators of the teachings of Buddha and into languages of Central Asia, Tibet and China. It is also said that Buddhists retired to Kashmir to preserve their religion which had come in conflict with other religious cults. From Mathura which was selected by the Sārwāstivādin as the venue of their early activities the Sārwāstivādins Ācharyas went to the regions of Udyana, Kashmir and Gandhara to Central Asia, China and other countries. They received all facilities in Kashmir for developing their tenets. Emperor Aśoka patronised the Sārwāstivādins in Kashmir to later stage. This made Kashmir a principal seat of Buddhism next to Mathura.

During the reign of Kaniṣka I Buddhism enjoyed a privileged position over other religions of the valley. Yuan-Chwang records that five hundred monks, along with Vasumitra assembled here in Kaniṣka's council to discuss the three *Piṭakas* and wrote commentaries on them. Large number of images of Buddha and Bodhisatvas were made to popularise it. Bodhisatva Maitreya was given an important position. He was regarded second only to the Śākyamuni Buddha. Many Buddhist scholars like Nāgārjuna, Āryadeva, Asauagoṣa and Vasubāndhu appeared on the scene and missionaries were sent out side this region to central Asia to propagate it. It became a state religion during the Kuṣāṇa period. It was a golden period for Mahāyāna Buddhism as Kaniṣka gave Kashmir as gift to Buddhist church⁸. Statues of Buddha and inscriptions engraved at their basement corroborate the flourishing condition of Buddhism not only in Kashmir but all over the upper belt of India.

This new religion continued to exist in the valley with other religious cults. The *Nīlamata* testifies the harmonious existence of Buddhism with popular religion of the region. Even Buddha was accepted as the incarnation of Viṣṇu in Kaliyuga and celebration of his birth day were prescribed⁹. This was quite contrary attitude about Buddha found in other *Purāṇas*, where he was said to create confusion in the minds of Asuras so that they give up Vedic path and become weak. The *Nīlamata* prescribed worship of Buddha by the *śākyas*. The dwellings be white washed and the *Śākyas* be honoured with *Cīvara*, food, books etc.¹⁰ The discovery of Gilgit manuscript and their publication by N. Dutta have thrown valuable light on flourishing condition of Buddhism in the Gupta period. It has also been shown that during the period there was a close link between Kashmir and Madhyadesa in regard to Buddhism. The harmonious position of Buddhism is also testified by the *Rājtarāṅgiṇī*. It also throws light on the popularity of this religion from the time of Aśoka to that of king Lalitaditya. *Stūpas*, *vihāras* and *caityas* were built by Aśoka and other Maurya and Kuṣāṇa rulers. During the reign of Kaniska, Nagarjuna came on the scene. He was regarded as Bodhisattva. Under his protection, the Buddhists obtained pre-ponderance in the land. They defeated all learned opponents in discussions and thus gave a total blow to the rites prescribed in the *Nīlamata*.¹¹ In other words, it was the first intellectual victory of Buddhism over Brahmanic religion of the valley.

Under the patronage of Kuṣāṇa kings, Huṣka, Juṣkā and Kaniska, Buddhism entered its golden phase. It is in this period that the fourth Buddhist council was held in Kashmir and many Buddhist structures sprang up.¹² Great Buddhist intellectuals resided in Kashmir during this period. Flourishing state of Buddhism in this period is attested to by archaeological remains¹³ and the account given by the Chinese traveller Fahian and Hsien-Tsang, who visited the valley. They testify existence of monasteries in the valley. According to Hsien-Tsang Mahadeva,

a native of Mathura and a non-arhat, who was residing in Patliputra, and was supported by Aśoka the emperor, got his views challenged by other monks. Finding the place of his residence uncongenial, he left it and went to Kashmir. Aśoka regretted his choice of supporting a wicked monk and atoned for his error by building monasteries in Kashmir for the monks. This account also throws light on the fact that some monks from Patliputra also helped in establishing a centre of Buddhism in the valley. In the middle of 8th century A.D. Ou-Kong visited the valley and he found the number of converts and *stūpas* enormously increased. This shows a rise in the popularity of Buddhism between the period of visits of the two travellers Hivan-Tsang and Ou-Kong when the Karkota dynasty ruled over the valley.

After establishing themselves, the Buddhists, under the banner of Nagarjuna, exercised excesses during the reign of Kuṣāṇa dynasty. This invoked the wrath of Nāgas, the tutelary deities of the valley, who revenged themselves by causing excessive snowfall and thus trying to destroy this religion. In the region of Abhimanyu anti-Buddhistic trends are seen. He himself was a devotee of Śiva. Even Hiven-Tsang accepts this setback to Buddhism, when he says that after the death of Kaniṣka I, a native dynasty of *Kṛtya* race ruled Kashmira and prosecuted Buddhism. He probably refers to Abhimanyu and Narain whose reign Nāga-cult was restored by Chandra Deva, a Brahmina, and Buddhist structures were levelled to the ground.¹⁴ With the ascendance of Mihirkul on the throne of Kashmira in about 515 A.D., the fall of Buddhism started. Monasteries were destroyed and Buddhists were massacred. Towards the end of his life, Mihirkul became a worshipper of Śiva.¹⁵ It is true that under the reign of Hindu Sāhis, Buddhism got some support and prospered for sometime.

Meghavāhana had a soft corner for Buddhism. In his reign, once again Buddhism got the upper hand. Many monasteries were built by the members of his family and animal

sacrifices were stopped. The Chinese traveller Hiven-Tsang also stayed in one of the monasteries. The 6th and 7th cent. A.D. was a period when Buddhism continued in the valley along with Brahminical cult. Even the *Nīlamata* testifies the prevalence of Buddhism during the said period along with *Nāga*-cult in the valley. It may be regarded as a period of harmony for both the religions. Acceptance of Buddha as an incarnation of Viṣṇu is a good example. Even his images were worshipped equally with Brahmanic deities.¹⁶

From literary as well as archaeological sources we find Buddhism and Brahmanical religion flourishing side by side from the time of Durlabhavardhan (600-636 A.D.) to that of Lalitaditya (699-736 A.D.). All the three faiths, Vaiṣṇava, Śaiva and Bauddha, were followed by the people and rulers of Kashmir who built temples, and *viḥāras* and *stūpas* equally. Here the words of Stein are quite significant which throw light on the religious atmosphere of the valley. He says "For centuries before Kalhaṇa's time Buddhism and the orthodox creeds had existed peacefully side by side in Kashmir. As far as the laity was concerned, they had to a great extent amalgamated..., of almost all royal and private individuals, who are credited with the foundation of Buddhist *stūpas* and *Vihāras*, it is recovered that they, or at least the members of their family with equal zeal endowed also shrines of Śiva or Viṣṇu."¹⁷

Even in Lalitaditya's time many *viḥāras* with lofty golden images of Buddha were built.¹⁸ Reference is there to Cankuna, a Tantrik Buddhist, in his region, which testifies to the introduction of Tantra in Buddhism. It may be regarded as the third phase in the history of Buddhism in the Valley. It continued in the valley till 9th century A.D. during the Hindu Sāhī dynasty, after which Brahmanic dynasty came into power. Sylvan Levi observes "The Buddhist dynasty of Sāhīs continued without interruption upto 9th century, when they were replaced by a Brahmanic dynasty bearing the same title, and which

dynasty existed upto the 11th century".¹⁹ According to Al-biruni the Sāhīs were Turks of Tibetan origin and were the staunch followers of Buddhism. They entered the Valley during the reign of Lalitāditya Mukṭāpīda and by marriage alliance or otherwise, became closely connected with Kashmir royalities.

One of the reasons for accepting Buddhism by the people of Kashmir along with Brahmanic religion was, its systematic philosophical back ground which catered to the ethical and philosophical needs of the human mind, while their own religion catered to the devotional and religious needs. Thus both the religions, Brahmanic as well as Buddhism, catered to the emotional and intellectual needs of the people of Kashmir and thus may be regarded as complimentary to each other. This was one of the main reasons for the harmonious existence of both the religion in the valley. Though waves of Buddhism and Brahminism came after one another, trying to over shadow the prevalent religion of the time, still the feeling of hostility was absent between the two. This feeling of harmony continued upto the time of Jonaraja, who pays ablation to Brahmanic deities as well as to Buddha and Jinas.²⁰ The religious history of Kashmir reveals to how from the time of Aśoka uptill 12th century A.D. Buddhism enjoyed equal position with Saivism and Vaiṣṇavism at times even better position. The inscription of queen Didda's time also corroborate the fact. The Arigom stone slab inscription of 1197 A.D. (No.6) presents a glorious picture of religious tolerance in ancient Kashmir. It tells us the shrine of Avalokiteśvara was first built in the vicinity of the Śiva temple of Gangeswara. This again is a good example of religious tolerance practised in ancient days.

Though Buddhism continued in the valley for a long time, yet from 8th century onwards a declining trend can be noticed in it, the causes of which can be traced even earlier. The causes can be classified into internal and external those which were in the system and those which were not in the system but were external

to it. In the internal causes, we can put the asceticism, preached by Buddhism. It challenged the normal life pattern, bringing in its trail corruption in the monastries where monks and nuns used to live together. Even foul means were used to seduce ladies. There is a reference in the *Rājtarāṅgiṇī*, where a Buddhist monk, living alone in monastery, seduced the queen through magical power, which resulted in burning of monastries and confiscation of grant in the form of villages given to Baudhas by Brahmins²¹ superimposed celibacy resulted in lust. Consequently, we find married monks, having property, long before Kalhana's time. The system became so corrupt by the end of 9th century A.D., that it stopped attracting people. In 10th and 11th century A.D., the monks and nuns lost high ideals, of morality. This was a time when decadence can be seen in society as depicted by Kshemendra in his works called the *Deśopadeśa* and the *Naramamātā*. A lady nun, *Śramanikā*, is shown playing the part of a go between.²²

In external causes of the down fall of Buddhism in the valley, we can recall Mihirakula, the white Hun, who created a havoc in the valley by his cruel nature. He was known as '*trikotihana*', a destroyer of three crores, and resembled, the god of death in his cruelty. According to Chinese Buddhist record, King Mihirkula, prosecuted the followers of Buddhism and thus brought its end in the north. He demolished hundreds of *caityas* and monastries and put to death thousands of Buddhists²³

From 8th cent. onwards, a tendency of indifference and disrespect in the rulers of Kashmir towards Buddhism, may be attributed due to the efforts of Nāgārjuna, who tried to eradicate Brahmanism from the valley by his power of learning and position, which he acquired as a result of Kaniska's gift of Kashmir to Buddhist church in the 2nd cent. A. D.. By this time the rulers of Kashmir seems to have become conscious of their religious faith and knew well the hallowness of Buddhism. Stones taken away from Jayendra *vihāra* to built Śiva temple is a good example.

Another reason, which roused Brahminic feelings in the inhabitants of the valley, was the repudiation of Brahminic orthodoxy by Buddhism. It not only challenged the authority of the Vedas, but adopted a hostile attitude towards Brahminic religion and its deities. Though it accepted Tantricism for its survival, yet the hostile attitude could not be got rid of. Consequently, in Buddhist Tantras, a number of Hindu gods are insulted, calumniated and humiliated. Thus we find Viṣṇu as *vāhana* of an Avalokiteśvara. Hindu gods with their consorts are described as being trampled in the description of *caṇḍaroṣaṇa*. He is also shown carrying a noose to bind the enemies such as Viṣṇu, Śiva and Brahmā, who cause suffering to humanity. These are a few literary examples in Vajrayāna Buddhism where Hindu deities are insulted and shown subservient to Buddhist gods. Plastic art was also affected by such thoughts. Consequently, we find a large number of stone images of Hindu gods being humiliated by Buddhist deities. In the Indian Museum, Calcutta and the Calcutta Vangīya Sāhitya Pariṣada images of Aparājitā and Vighnāntaka are shown trampling on Gaṇeśā, the bestower of perfection and success in Tantrika rites, under their feet. In Bodhagayā images of Śiva and Gaurī are shown trampled by Buddha. They did not even spare the holy *tīrthas* of Hindus, so highly praised for their sanctity and purification of Sins. In the Cittaśodhana Prakaraṇa of Anjadeva, the holy river Gaṅgā is decried in unequivocal language²⁴. Even some paintings represented the same feelings. Such hostile feelings and antagonistic stand towards Brahmanic religion could not be tolerated by a staunch Hindu. Hence reaction was bound to come. Consequently, Śaṅkarācārya appears on the scene as a saviour of Brahmanic religion and philosophy.

Śaṅkarācārya not only eradicated Buddhism from some parts of India, but also visited the valley in the course of his *digvijaya*²⁴. While uprooting Buddhism from the valley he made the inhabitants conscious of the fact that Buddhism was a rival faith, opposed to the Āgamsāstra. Consequently, we find scholars like

Jayantha, Varadraja and others looking down upon Buddhism as a hostile sect. Jayaratha considered Buddha as bent on destroying the world²⁶, Varadraja's purpose in writing the Vartika on the Śiva Sūtras was to check the atheistic doctrine of Nagarjuna and others²⁷. Even Kalhana regarded Baudhas as enemies of Āgama-Śāstra, who brought to an end the rites prescribed in the Nīlamata²⁸. Revival of Brahmanism in the hearts of scholars and kings was so strong that we find king Kshemagupta burning down the Jayendra Vihāra and using its material for erecting a Śiva temple called Kshemagaurīśwara²⁹. The visit of Śankara to the valley was so effective that not only the scholars started hating it, but the royal patronage was stopped to it. All this resulted in crippling it for ever.

Advent of Islam in the valley gave another blow to Buddhism. Shah Mirza was the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir in 1339 A.D. During Islamic period, like Hinduism Buddhism was also crushed by Muslim rulers. Jonarāja and Śrīvara give a vivid account of the religious condition during this period in their works. Sikandara Lodi (Cir 1495-1516 A.D.), an iconoclast, not only destroyed Hindu temples and images but Buddhist also. He converted the inhabitants of the valley, whether Hindus or Buddhists to Islam and thus vanquished Buddhism from the Valley.

Thus in early 11th cent. Buddhism was on its decline in the valley, though movement against it started as early as 7th cent. A.D. as noticed by Hiven-Tsang. In 9th cent. A.D. it lost its place as an essential religion of the valley. The Brahmanical Bhakti movement, serving the emotional need, also contributed to its decline. The emergence of Śaiva philosophy gave a fatal blow to Buddhism forever.

The story of Buddhism does not end with its decline in India in general and in Kashmir in particular. Buddhism left no efforts for its survival, ranging from borrowing of ideas and

practices from other religions of India. Prior to its disappearance from Indian scene, Buddhism underwent a lot of changes by absorbing philosophical concept and Puranic religion in its struggle for survival. Relaxation in monastic rules was made and the concept of liberation was more generalised. The orthodox system assumed a new form under Mahāyān Buddhism. But this was not enough for saving Buddhism from extinction. Consequently, the Mahāyān sect of Buddhism adopted Puranic religion to safe guard its existence, because the concept of Puranic deities was quite attractive and popular. Hence, Buddha was deified as Lokottara and a large number of abstract philosophical concepts were also deified and given gross forms. Some Hindu gods and goddesses such as Śiva, Viṣṇu, Gaṇeśh and Saraswatī and others were also included into the pantheon of one of the branches of Buddhism known as Guhyasamāja. It also adopted the ways of the Hindu Tantra. Buddhist monks mastered the art of Tantra. Nagarjuna, the great Buddhist monk was a great tantrika Yogi and an alchemist. His literary works on Buddhist Tantra were authority in northern region.

Even Śakti-worship, an essential concept of Tantra, was incorporated in Buddhism in the form of Tārā-cult. With the appearance of Avalokiteśwara and Tārā in Buddhist pantheon, many mythological and metaphysical ideas woven around Śiva and Durgā were also accepted. Thus we find five Dhyānī Buddhas each with a śakti. Even Avalokiteśwara Bodhisattva is heard saying that he will take the form of Viṣṇu, Śiva and Gaṇeś to preach *dharma* to his worshippers³⁰. This is a burning example of absorbing three popular deities of Puranic religion in Buddhism for its survival. Even Dharīnī the magical formula, is supposed Gaṇeśa to be borrowed from the Vedas³¹.

In the valley some other factors, apart from those mentioned above, also helped Buddhism in its struggle for survival. The geographical condition, its people and faith had an impact on it as it entered the valley. It is here that the doctrines of Sarvāstivād

were more humanised to suit the social and political situation. The society under Kuṣāṇa rulers became more cosmopolitan than that in the previous regime. The boundaries of caste, creed and race seemed to have almost disappeared, when Buddhist framed their law. Hence Buddhism became more cosmopolitan than what it was in the beginning. The rigid rules of the Hīnayāna were threatened. Thus emerged the Mahāyāna where the theory of Nirvāṇa was changed into rebirth. Concepts of heaven and hell, even of icy-hell were added.

In its struggle for survival in the valley, Buddhism borrowed many philosophical ideas and ethical norms from Śaiva cult of the valley, Consequently, for common people it was difficult to discriminate the two.

Since Buddhism was also an ecclesiastical religion, it had to shake off its rigidity to be acceptable by all, irrespective of caste, creed and sex. Mahāyāna was a step in this direction. With the efforts of Aśoka it became a popular religion of the valley. All these changes are nothing but struggle for survival. Incorporation of puranic deities and Tantrika practices are further steps in this series. References are there in the Rājtarāṅgiṇī to the magic powers during the reign of King Lalitaditya, It is a clear indication of prevalence of Tantrika Buddhism in 8th cent. A.D.

Iconography of the valley was also affected by these new trends in Buddhism. Thus we find the images of Buddha and Bodhisattvas carved on the pattern of Hindu gods. In the valley such images are found in Paraspur (ancient Parihāspura) and Panderethan, which are a good example of the absorption of Tantra in Buddhism³². A bronze statue of Bodhisattva Padmapāṇi with sacred thread of queen Didda's time, not only is an example of changed Buddhism in its struggle for survival, but shows the enguling impact of Tantra, otherwise Brahmanism. Inscriptions of queen Didda's time throw ample light on the religious conditions in 10th cent. A.D. From these inscriptions³³ it is clear that Mahāyāna

Buddhistic deities as well as Brahmanical deities were worshipped here. The queen wanted the people live in peace inspite of Muslim attack over India. The Buddhists used the weapon of 'mantra' in this defence deal.

The Vejibror (Bijbihara) stone inscription of the reign of Raj Deva in 1236 A.D. also testifies the Tantrika form of Buddhism popular in the valley. The *mandalaka* referred to here is the *maṇḍal* or mystical circle. At the top of the inscription the round disc is nothing but the *mandalaka*.³⁴

In the later part of the middle period we find monotheistic trend of Advaita and Kashmira Śaivism in Tantrika Buddhism or Vijrayāna. The theory of *Vajradhara* or *Ādi-Buddha*, to whom five *dyāni* Buddhas owe their origin, is a good example. This *Ādi Buddha* resembles to Sankara's *Nirguṇa Brahma* or *Param Śiva* of Pratyabhijñā system. It is absolute reality and when personified is known as *Vajradhara*. It is conceived in two forms. Single and in pair known as *Yali-Yum*. The *Yah-yum* forms resembles *Saguna Brahma* of Śankara's philosophy, which is associated with *Māyā* or *Śiva* with *Śakti*. Here the *Śakti* is called *Prajñāpārmīṭā* who is embracing here spouse. Thus we see that Buddhism borrowed many philosophical concepts and deities from other philosophies, Purāṇa and Tantra in its struggle for survival.

The concept of Bodhisattva, introduced for the first time by Mahāyāna sect, was for practical purpose. Though Buddhism came as a reaction against Brahmanism overloaded ritualism and preached high philosophy of four noble Truths and eightfold path without allotting any place to god and its worship, yet it could not satisfy the religious need of the people who found solace in worshipping their personal gods. Consequently, not only the concept of Bodhisattva, but some other deities such as Avalokiteśvara, Tārā Manjushri, *Prajñāpārmīṭā* and others were invented on the pattern of Puranic deities to satisfy the devotional need of the people. It also accepted *mantra* and *yantra* found in the Purāṇas and the

Tantra for practical purposes. Thus Buddhism passed through different stages, sometimes relaxing its rules and sometimes borrowing philosophical concepts and religious deities etc, in its struggle for survival. But all this proved fatal for it. The emergence of Vajrayāna hastened the disappearance of Buddhism as a living religion in the valley as well as in other parts of the country.

The decaying Buddhism left its impact on the life, and literature, art and architecture, people and philosophy of Kashmir.

It was Buddhism, which passed on Tantrism to the Puranic Śaiva religion of the valley. Moreover, the polytheistic religion of the valley, with inclination towards ritualistic Śaivism, deprived of philosophical background, was provided with a framework of philosophy by Buddhism. The excesses exercised by Buddhist scholars like Nāgarjuna, roused antagonistic feelings among the scholars of Kashmir and also pressed them to evolve a philosophy of their own on the pattern provided by Buddhism. Buddhism also passed on to Śaivism those philosophical concepts which it had borrowed from the Veda. Some of its own new concepts were also incorporated in Śaivism. Even Buddhist terminology was accepted by Śaiva philosophers of the valley while writing books on Śaivism. For example Somananda called his book as *Śivadrsti on Buddhist way* where 'dithi' in Pali stands for philosophy or *Darśana*. Buddhism also left its impact on some writers such as Kshemendra, who was called as 'the Kashmirian Buddhist poet', though he was not a Buddhist. He had an inclination towards Buddhism and hence he had eulogized Buddha as an incarnation of Viṣṇu.

Buddhism also left its mark on the art and architecture of the valley. Since Aśoka's time to 7th or 8th cent. A.D. Kashmir was an important centre of Buddhism. Consequently, the art and architecture of the valley were influenced by it. Excavated remains display the impact of Gandhara school of art which was passed on to it through Buddhist art.

Images of Buddha were carved to satisfy the devotional need of the people on the pattern of Brahmanic religion. Some statues of Buddha and Bodhisattvas, which were colossal in size and generally standing, were brought from Mathura, a great centre of art and architecture in ancient times. Images of Śiva and Viṣṇu in standing and meditating *postures dhyāna mudrā*, were the result of the impact of Buddhist art on Hindu iconography. Thus Gandhar art and Mathura art found its place in the valley. We find a great deal of similarity between the general design, technique and use of material of the two religions. Thus we see that whatever Buddhism borrowed in the field of philosophy, religion, art and architecture was passed on to Kashmir Śaivism.

It may be pointed out that the cosmopolitan aspect of Buddhism which developed in the Kashmir valley had its impact on the Buddhist religion and art of Ladakh and Leh and also in the vast area of Tibet. The various traits of Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna which had grown in the valley are clearly discernable in the art of Tibet and western China.

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5. ते वादिनः पराजित्य वादेन निखिलान् बुधान् ।
त्रियां नीलपुराग्नेकात्किन्द नागमद्विषः ॥ I. 178.
6. *Mahāyāna Buddhism* pp. 69-70.
7. *Abhinavagupta*. p. 149.
8. R.T.I. 171-178.
9. विष्णुदेवो जगन्नाथः प्राप्ते ब्रह्मन् कलौ युगे ।
अष्टाविंशतमे भावी बुद्धोनाम जगद्गुरुः ॥ The Nīlamata 708.
10. Ibid 714.
11. R.T.I. 179.
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20. आत्मावस्तु शिवोऽस्तु वास्त्वथ हरिः सोऽयं तम्भु अस्तुवा ।
बुद्धो वास्तु जिनोऽस्तु वास्त्वथ परं तस्मै नमः कूर्महे ॥ R.T. 250.
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26. *Haricarita cihātamanī*, XIII 91-92, XVII 8-9.
27. नागबोध्यादिभिः सिद्धनीस्तिकानां पुरस्सरैः ।
आक्रान्ते जीव लोकेऽस्मिन्नात्मेश्वर निरासकैः ॥ 1.1.

28. तस्मिन्नवसरे बौद्धा देशे प्रबलतां ययौ ।
नागार्जुनेन सुधिया बोधिसत्वेन पालिताः ॥
ते वादिनः पराजित्य वादेन निखिलान् वुषान् ।
क्रियां नील पुराण्येकानचिद्धन्दनागभद्रिषः ॥ R.T.I. 177-78.
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The Tantricism

The Tantric philosophy and practice go a long way in moulding Kashmir Śaivism. Like Puranic religion, Tantra practices were also prevalent in ancient Kashmir. The Tantrik religion and practices are as old as Vedic religion. The archaeological remains of Indus Valley civilization prove the antiquity of Tantra. Hence a separate treatment of Tantric philosophy and practice is not out of place here. It has a great impact on the religion and philosophy of Kashmir. It helped in evolving a system of philosophy there.

Indian culture is a complex one. It has its roots in the hoary past, about which scholars hold divergent views. Regarding

Tantra scholars, especially western ones, hold strong views. According to them Tantra is alien pre-Vedic and non-Āryan, which was assimilated by the old Brahmanic religion in course of time. To prove their point, they refer to phallus worship, adoration of the principle of fertility, belief in *mantra* and *yantra*, use of flesh and wine etc. But if we delve deep into the spirit of Tantra literature and practices, we find their counterpart in the Vedas, the Smritis and the Puranas.

Let us consider the meaning of 'Tantra' itself. Though the word is used to denote various meaning ranging from book to a philosophic system, yet the word is derived from the root *Tan*, to spread, or knowledge. According to Prof. S.N. Dasgupta, the root '*tantri*' is used here in the sense of *Tan* and hence Tantra is that literature by which knowledge or *Jñāna* is spread. The suffix '*tra*' stands for '*to save*'. Consequently, through Tantra literature that knowledge is spread which saves the human beings from the circle of rebirth. Thus like Upaniṣadic knowledge, Tantra also leads to salvation, by destroying the said circle.

The definition of Tantra implies that it is a part of *Śruti* or Vedic literature. A careful study of the Vedas reveal that the Vedic practices to achieve the highest knowledge, are of two kinds: One where the restrictions of caste, creed, sex, etc. are observed and the other where no such restrictions are imposed. The former believes in dos and don'ts and the literature discussing these ethical norms is known as *Smṛti*. Here detailed rules for all the four castes and then duties etc. are laid down, which one is required to observe to achieve the summum bonum of life. In the latter neither restriction is imposed nor distinction is made between the two sexes. Who-soever desires salvation or highest knowledge, can join this system. Thus we see ethical differences between the two systems, Vedic and Tantric yet the purpose of the two is the same. The former takes resort to the path of renunciation *nivṛttimārga* and the latter to action - *pravṛttimārga*. In the eyes of one the senses and their objects are hurdles in the path of enlightenment,

while to the other, the senses and, their objects are the manifestation of lord Śiva. It believes liberation through enjoyment. The whole world here is the manifestation of Śiva through his Śakti. The concept of Śakti is inseparable in Tantra. It is as real as Śiva and plays a more important role in creation. The creation, being manifestation of Śiva is real and not a thing to be despised of. Thus Tantra throws open the path of enlightenment in the midst of worldly pleasures. Consequently Vedic and Tantric systems are two sides of the same coin. Kulluka Bhatta, the commentator of the Manusmṛiti, has quoted a passage from Harita's work which also corroborate the point¹. In the Gītā, lord Kṛṣṇa tells that his worship is of three kinds, which includes Tantric way. The Devī Bhāgavata regards Tantra as a Vedāṅga, a part of the Veda. Even Tantra acknowledges its dependence on the Veda². Several examples from the Vedas and the Tantras can be quoted to prove the point. Scholars like Woodruff and Abhinavagupta consider Tantra as a continuation of the Veda and assign the origin of the two to the *Parāvāka*.

The *Pancarakāras*, for which the Tantras are labelled as non-Aryans are also found in the Vedic literature. The concept of the Vedic sacrifices is based on the idea of *maithunīkarama* or copulation, leading to spiritual happiness. Examples may be cited from the Brāhmaṇa texts³ as well as from the Upaniṣadas⁴, where copulation is regarded as *Agnihotra* or sacrifice. Performed in a true religious spirit, it ensures spiritual uplift otherwise it leads to degradation. Even the use of wine, *Surā*, was prescribed in some sacrifices for purification. But its use was deprecated. Same was true to animal sacrifices where the meat was consumed by the sacrificer⁵. While performing sacrifices in company, the members of the group became Brahmins and the caste distinction disappeared⁶. Even *mantra*, *yantra* and the worship of *lingam* can be traced in the Vedic literature⁷. These similarities between the Vedic and Tantrik rituals prove Tantra as a part of Vedic lore.

The Tantras also accept their being a part of the Vedic literature. The Kulārṇava Tantra says that for each age of a suitable literature, Śāstra, is given. For example for *Satyuga* the Śruti for *Tretā* the Smṛti, for *Dwāpara* the Purāṇas and for *Kaliyuga* the Tantras⁸. These Śāstras are just various methods to teach the eternal truth adopted according to physical and mental ability and the life span of people in each age. The Tantra literature is modelled in such a way that it suits well to the people of Kali age. Thus Tantra is a continued manifestation vedic thought.

The six systems of Indian Philosophy, which accept the authority of the Veda, are also accepted by Tantra. In the Kulārṇava Tantra, Śiva accepts these systems as six limbs of *Kula* or *Śakti* which form the parts of his body. Thus we see that all the systems of Indian philosophy find place in Tantra. Even Vedic rituals found in Śruti, Smṛti and Purāṇa and accepted by it. Even magic etc. found in Tantra is Vedic. The misuse of it is criticised. In the Kulārṇava Saṁhitā, a small treatise on Tantra, Śiva describes some horrible rites, seeing which his heart trembles. He asks his wife to conceal them from the people of *Kali* age, who already indulge in nefarious activities. Such references on the one hand tell us that some horrible rites were popular among the people, on the other they show the attempt made by Tantra to sublimate them. Arthor Aulon is right when he says, "There is nothing, in any event, in the point that the magical contents of the Tantra Sas-tra make it contrary to Veda. Those who bring such a charge must also prefer it against the Atharva Veda"⁹. Thus the Vedic truth is presented in a novel way in the Tantra to suit the people of modern times. It is only old wine in new jars presented by Śiva and Śakti to men of Kaliyuga to suit their abilities. Even most of the religious practices prevalent in present day India are Tantric in nature.

From the above discussion, it is clear that Tantra is of Indian origin, which crossed the boundaries after the great war and entered south eastern countries of Asia. The three zones divided

in Tantric literature cover these places. Accordingly Kashmir falls under *Rathakrānta* zone. It was a famous centre of Tantric practices is corroborated by other sources. This fact was recognised when Śāṅkara visited the Valley.

A doubt arises in regard to the Śruti interpreted through Tantra. Though the answer to it is given in the Tantras, itself, still the changing socio-religious conditions in ancient days could not be overlooked. The Vedic spiritual ideal, which had lost its vigour in the course of its journey, prior to Buddhism, put on a new garb in the form of Tantra to suit the needs and frailties of the people. It was an effort to Āryanize or put on the Aryan path those people who were becoming Vṛsala or non-Ārya, because of not persuing their Vedic religion. In India efforts have always been made to put in practice the abstract concepts of Philosophy, which believes in the upliftment of man. Sir Radhakrishnan rightly observes, "Philosophy in India is not an abstract study remote from life of man. It is intimately woven into the texture of human existence. The civilization of India is an effort to embody philosophical wisdom in social life."¹⁰ Consequently these philosophical truths, otherwise basic truths of life are some times taught through Puranic religion and sometimes through Tantric religion.

The Tantric ideology and practices had established itself in India so widely and so firmly, that Buddhism, an anti Vedic system could not escape its impact.

Tantra leads to salvation through enjoyment. Here the body of the *Sādhaka* is the universe where in resides his desired deity. Hence every activity from drinking wine to copulation are inspired by spiritual end., and lead to achieve the goal of life. The mental attitude plays an important role here. Even Tantra describes the five *Makāras* if observed without this attitude.¹¹ But the western scholars failed to comprehend this spirit of Tantra and labiled it as non-Āryan and obscene on the basis of their theory of Āryan exodus. Archaeological remains are also inter-

preted in this light. History of Indian culture and ideas could not be complete without understanding the Tantra in its true perspective. Unlike Vedic path, it is a thoroughfare on which every one, without any discrimination of caste, creed, sex, can tread on and up reach his desired goal.

As said earlier Tantra was popular in the Valley in ancient times. This is confirmed by literary and archeological sources. References are there to *matrikās* and *devīcakras* in the *Rājtaranginī* of Kalhana¹². The worship of '*matrikās*', which is identical with Śakti worship, played an important role in the rituals which also confirm the popularity of Tantra there. Mystical diagrams are prepared and worshipped in houses and temples till to day in Kashmir according to the rules of Tantra-śāstra. The *Śricakra* on the Sarikaparvat in Srinagar and *Jwālāmukhī Cakra* on the rocky hills above Uyen (Sanskrit Ovana) in Vihi Pargana are regarded as natural, *Swābhāvika*, and are of special reference¹³. The worship of *mātrika* and construction of Bhairava temples continued during the time of Avantiverman (855-883 A.D.)¹⁴.

One of the major reasons for the prevalence of Tantra in Kashmir was its geographical conditions. Mountaneous rampart, availability of food, especially meat, fish and drink and freedom to women folk provided congenial atmosphere for Tantric beliefs to flourish in the Valley. When Śankar visited the Valley, he took note of Śakti worship and Tantric practices in Kashmir. He knew well that these were the branches of the Vedas. He, therefore, provided such a model of philosophy in which all these could be harmonised and once again the Vedic religion be established in the valley. For this he gave a new interpretation to the dualistic Tantra. His monistic model of philosophy served the purpose. But he never compromised with Buddhism, which was also prevalent in the Valley, at the time of his visit. The reason was its being anti-Vedic.

The prevalence of Tantricism in the valley is also in the works of writers like Damodargupta and Bilhana.

It may be pointed out here that the Tantric beliefs could not make a head way in the Valley during the *mediaval* period due to the Vedic strong hold in the region, the Kaulas and the Kāpālikas had to migrate to central India and Orissa where they developed the Tantric cult.

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Emergence of Kashmir Saivism

For fine arts a calm and serene atmosphere is needed. But in the case of philosophical systems it is not true. All the heterogeneous and homogeneous systems of philosophy in India are the result of conflict of ideas. All these systems came into being when their very ideas were threatened. All these systems trace the history of their thoughts to ancient period, but they are systematised at a time when there was war of ideas. The philosophical ideas of Advaita Vedānta, have a long ancient tradition; the birth of which is attributed to a deity. But Śaṅkara moulded them into a philosophical system, when Jainism and Buddhism

attacked at the very root of these philosophical ideas, i.e. Veda. He not only gave a systematic form to these ideas, but also synthesised the various religious cults of his time which were of Vedic origin. Prior to the emergence of Kashmir Śaivism in the valley, a chaos of religious ideas had set in. Social and religious conditions were not very happy. The Purāṇic religion, which was the earliest religion of the valley, was threatened by Buddhism. The spirit of harmony between the two disappeared. The scholars of Kashmir were taken back by the sharp arguments of Nagarjuna and other Buddhist scholars. Under such pressing conditions, the need for philosophising the prevalent Vedic religious cults was felt.

The birth and growth of Kashmir Śaiva Philosophy is connected with the Hindus in mediaval period, covering a span of about three centuries beginning with Vasugupta, the human founder of Śaiva philosophy in Kashmir in 8th century A.D.

Social, political and religious conditions contributed a lot for the emergence of Kashmir Śaivism in the early medieval period in the valley.

In the early medieval period a new dynasty called Karakotak, after the name of a mythical serpent mentioned in the Mahābhārata came into power. It ruled over the valley for about two and a half century, with the ascendance of Durlabhavardhan on the throne in 602 A.D. The most illustrious king of this dynasty was Lalitāditya Muktapida who ruled over Kashmir for about four decades. (71 -755 A.D). He extended the boundaries of his territory far and wide and improved the economic and academic conditions by adding wealth and intelligentsia to his kingdom. He was the first Hindu king who invaded Tibet and Turkistan. Kalhaṇa has described his *digvijaya*, which is also confirmed by the Chachanāmā, a contemporary foreign account of the conquest of Sindha. In a letter addressed to Mohammed Kasim¹ by Dāhar, Lalitāditya is described as a powerful king of Kashmir

on whose royal threshold other rulers of Hindu have placed their heads, who sways the whole Hind, even the countries of Makran and Turam. To extend his territory towards south-east, he attacked Kannauja. Even Turkistan was not spared, Alberunis account also corroborates it. The Muttai of his text, according to Buhler is Muktāpida, 'who ruled over the whole world'. Extension of Kashmir territory to south-east upto Kannauja and subjugation of Turkistan played a major role in formulating the economic as well as religio-cultural history of Kashmir. Another king who requires notice is Jayāpīda, the grand son of Lalitāditya. He was famous for his scholarship and martial qualities.² In his time different branches of learning, were given due importance study of grammar, poetics, literature etc. was revived. Scholars from all over India were invited and patronized by this great king. Consequently, Kashmir became famous as a seat of learning. Euoliging him, Kalhaṇa says that there was a famine of intelligentsia in other parts of India.³ Thus during the reign of the Karkotaka dynasty, Kashmir enjoyed great political power. Peace and prosperity reigned every where. Under this dynasty Kashmir became famous for learning. Many noted scholars, such as Kshira and others, in the field of Sanskrit literature and grammar belonged to this period.

Another dynasty which requires reference is Utpal dynasty. Awantiverman ascended the throne in 855 A. D. and founded this new dynasty after the name of his grand father Utpal, who was the first minister of the tottering dynasty of Karokotak. With the help of his able minister, Suyya, Avantiverman brought acres of land under cultivation. The valley under his reign enjoyed economic prosperity. Once more the cause of learning was given due place. His minister Sura honoured scholars by offering seats in the royal court. Consequently, scholars of different disciplines flocked in the court from distant places.⁴ Once more Kashmir regained its old fame as a seat of learning. His son Sankarverman succeeded his father in 884 A.D. and brought under subjugation neighbouring territories. Thus the boundary of Kashmir was extended upto

Punjab and Kalul. He made Darads on the east and Turushkas on the west to bow before him. He ruled upto 902 A.D.

In early 10th century, Yaskara founded a new dynasty. In his time Hindu religion was restored and sacrifices were performed. During his reign peace and prosperity was every where. Security arrangements were so good that people slept with open doors and travellers moved without the fear of being robbed. People were busy in their professions and Brahmins devoted their time in academic pursuits. This was a period of peace and prosperity, but may be called the climax of Hindu rule.

Actually after the death of Sankarverman a general degradation in almost all fields could be seen. Social, economic, moral and literary conditions suffered a great set back in the hands of the rulers of Lohar dynasty. Ministries were corrupt and kings and queens were sensual. Lust for political power led to patricide. People became superstitious and Tantric practices were followed to achieve the desired goal. Such conditions led to disintegration and demoralisation of the people which paved the way for foreign rule.

In the field of religion, early mediaval period saw the revival of Brahmanism not only in the valley but all over India. The foregoing period was of religious tolerance. Different religions flourished side by side, and rulers were sectarian. Aśoka, a follower of Buddhism, also encouraged Brahmanism. Similarly in south India, the Satavahanas, who followed Brahmanism, had a tolerant attitude towards Buddhism. But early mediaval period saw the revival of old faith. People became conscious of their glorious past and revived the Puranic religion. One of the religions cult which became very popular in northern India at this time was the Śaiva cult. From inscriptions it is clear that majority of Gahadwala, chedi, Chandella and Orisa were styled as '*Parama maheśwara*'. Several rulers dedicated their kingdoms

either to śiva or śaiva ascetics. Even in other parts of the country this cult was popular. Madhya Pradesh, Varanasi, Mathura, Sthaneshwara, Ujjain, Mahishwati (M.P.) and Kannanja were the main centres of Śaivism. Images of Umā-Maheśwara, Kalyāṇa-sundara and Ardhanārīśwara found in Kannauja corroborate the fact. In Kashmir also this period is important from the religious point of view. From the accounts given by Kalhaṇa and also accorded by inscriptions, it was a time of religious fervent. The kings of the Karkotak dynasty who ruled for 254 years from 602 A.D. to 856 A.D. over Kashmir, were the worshippers of Śiva—a religious cult popular at that time among the Hindu all over India and quite ancient in Kashmir. The immigration of scholars from various parts of the country in general and from Kannanja in particular affected the religious life of Kashmir during mediaeval period. King Lalitāditya brought many scholars from outside Kashmir, whom Atrigupta, the ancestor of Abhinavagupta, requires special mention. He lived in Antarvedi, in the reign of king Yashovarman of Kannauja. He was a great scholar of various branches of learning and śaiva tantra in particular. Being impressed by his scholarship, King Lalitāditya brought the whole family of Atrigupta to Kashmir.⁵ The family members of Atrigupta were also highly educated and staunch devotees of Śiva. Narshinghagupta, alias Chukhul, the father of Abhinavagupta, was equal in scholarship to his father. The whole family says Abhinavagupta regarded worldly belongings as insignificant as straw before the devotion of Śiva.⁶ Madhuraja, a South Indian, who became student of Abhinavagupta, eulogises him as the incarnation of Lord Dakṣiṇā mūrti.

Construction of temples of various Puranic deities continued even during the reign of Utpal dynasty which ruled over the valley for nearly half a century with the ascendance of Avantinermaṇ on the throne in 855 A.D. Though he was a staunch Vaiṣṇava yet he built temple of Śiva. He was also influenced by Buddhism as he practiced non-violence.

At the time of Sankarverman's rule (882-902 A D) Hindu Shahiya dynasty was ruling over Kabul and Gandhara. Its founder was Lalhiya Shahi. These Shahi's were the believers in Brahmanical religion as is clear from the inscription of Bhim (Lahore Museum). The mark of bumped bull on coins of this time corroborate the fact. The 9th century is important in the religious history of Kashmir as great Brahmanical activities were taking place in its neighbourhood in Gandhara town and temples at Kalar were built by Kalar himself. Most probably he is Lalliya Shali of Kalhana's *RājTarāṅgiṇī*. Not only Kalar, but the entire area of the Salt Range has antiques belonging to the second half of the 9th century. The art of temple building and icon making of Kashmir could not escape the influence of Gandhara art flourishing at that time in the vicinity. The similies used by Kalhana for Lallitya Shahi of Udabhandpur at the time of contest with Sankarverman are noteworthy as they throw a flood of light on the religious conditions of that time. He is compared with Āryāvarta, lying between the Himalayas and the Vindhya mountains, in whose town of Udabhandha other kings took shelter just as mountains took refuge in the ocean when threatened by Indra. Other Similies such as Sun-disec and *Śrīman* used for him by Kalhana clearly show the respect and prestige he acquired in the domain of religion. Even coins with horseman and bull originated with Brahmin Shahis.

With Shahi-war a new era began in Gandhara-Kashmir relations which affected the religion and religious act of the Valley. Bhima Shahi's father adopted a friendly attitude toward Kashmir, while Bhima established matrimonial relations of his grand daughter Didda with Kashmir king Kshemagupta. The coins issued in his time and temples erected by Bhima in Kashmir are conspicuous of the impact of Gandhara on Kashmir.

Though a general degradation had set in every walk of life, still the religious fervor continued among the masses till 13th

century A.D. People believed in the efficacy of religious observances. For worldly or spiritual gains some kind of religious-performance was needed. Even for begetting a virtuous progeny religious performances were observed. The birth of Abhinavagupta itself is a proof of it.

The political history of Kashmir subsequent to Kalhana was full of turmoil and disintegration. In 1339 Shah Mir deposed queen Kota, the widow of the last Hindu ruler; Islam entered the valley with Shah Mir. Still śaiva religion had its impact on the minds of the people. We find sage Lalleśvarī and Nuruddin as mystic poets of Advait Śaiva philosophy in 14th century.

Before discussing the emergence of Śaiva philosophy, it would be better to throw light on it. Śaivism in general is that system of the Philosophy where in lord śiva is regarded as the ultimate reality, from whom the world reality derives its existence. Śaivism is of three kinds dualistic, dualistic cum non-dualistic and monistic. These various forms of Śaiva philosophy have been prevalent in various part of the country. All the three forms are based on 'Śaiva āgamas and are regarded to be preached on earth by three mental sons, *mānasputra*, of the sage Durvāsā. The śaiva philosophy which emerged in Kashmir in early mediaval period is monistic in nature and Tryambaka, one of the mental sons of Durvāsā, is its propounder. The śaiva philosophy of the valley is also known as the Kashmir śaivism because most of its writers belong to Kashmir, though their ancestors came here from outside. Moreover, this system is also confined to the valley, hence it is also called by the said name. It is, also known as *Trika-Śāsana* or *Trika-Śāstra* or *Rahasya Sampradāya* on the basis of its subject matter and mode of teaching. Since the system discusses *Paśu*, the individual self, *Paṭi* the highest self and *Pāśa*, the bondage, it is called Trika system. Its literature is also of three kinds: Āgama, Spanda and Pratyabhīñjā, which attribute the said name to it. In this system recognition of

one's real self plays a major role. Hence it is called as the Pratyabhiñjā system.

The monistic system of Śaivism came into existence in the early medieval period in Kashmir. Its emergence is not an accident in the history of Kashmir. The socio-religious conditions which were prevalent in the valley since time immortal contributed a lot to its birth in the 8th century A.D. Here the purpose is to point those factors which led its birth through human agency and not to trace the history of Śaiva philosophy.

According to tradition the Śaiva Āgamas, including monistic Tantras and the Śivasūtra of Vasugupta are regarded eternal like the Vedas, which were imparted to human beings by supernatural agency. Abhinava Gupta has explained this eternity in the Mālinivijayavārtik. According to him creation is of two kinds: speech and objects, *vācyavācaka*. Speech is again of two kinds, divine and human. The Śaivāgamas are divine speech and as such are the grossest manifestation of supreme *vimarśa*. While human speech is the grossest manifestation of individual *vimarśa*. In the Parātrimsikāvivarāṇa, the divine speech is said to be eternal in the form of *Parāvāka*, the ultimate cause of vocal speech. Hence the Āgamas appear and disappear but never originate, because they are eternal, with Śiva, the eternal reality. The Śiva Sūtras, falling in the category of Āgamas are stated to be revealed to Vasugupta in 8th Cent. A.D. and not written by him.

There are various views regarding the revelation of these Sūtras to Vasugupta. According to Kallat these aphorisms were taught by Śiva to Vasugupta, residing on Mahādeva Hill in the valley of Harvan stream, which is behind the Shalimar Garden. According to Bhaskar another philosopher of Śaivism, these aphorisms were revealed by a Siddhā. He also tells the transmission of these sutras through teacher and taught, and he being one of them in the lineage, is writing the commentary

called Śivasūtravārtika. Kshemaraja supports the view of Kallat and gives the reason of revelation. Since Vasugupta did not accept the teachings of Nagbodhi, the Buddhist, Siddhas and of other philosophical systems and was a great devotee of Śiva, the lord unfolded the *sūtras* to him in a dream, so that esoteric traditional teaching may not be lost in the world which was influenced by dualistic philosophy⁹. Here the question of mode of transmitting the *Sūtrās* to Vasugupta is not as important as the reason for revealing them. These were revealed to him to counter the effect of dualistic Śaiva philosophy and the teachings of Nagbodhi or Nagarjuna, and other Buddhist teachers, prevalent in Kashmir at the time of Vasugupta. The Commentary of Kshemaraja on the *Sūtras* clearly throw light on the philosophical thoughts popular at that time. It was a time when *Anātmavāda* of Buddhism and dualistic Śaiva philosophy were getting the upper hand in the intellectual circle of Kashmir. The Term '*Narabhedavāda*' used by Kshemaraja, probably refers to the Nareshwara Pariksha of Sadyojoti, a work which propounds difference between *nara* i.e. individual self and *Iśwara*, the universal self, and refutes the unity of the two. The purpose of Vasugupta is not actually to refute the dualistic interpretation of Śaiva philosophy but to provide correct interpretation to it, which was monistic idealism. The reason is clear. The perception of difference is a common phenomenon, hence it requires no philosophical interpretation, while non-different attitude can only be developed through philosophical insight. The whole incident can be compared with the teaching of the *Gītā*, to Arjuna by lord Kṛiṣṇa, where he not only intends to save the Vedic religion from oblivion but also provides the correct interpretation. The time of Vasugupta can also be fixed as the later part of the 8th century A.D. or the beginning of the 9th century A.D. since he was the teacher of Kallat, who flourished in the reign of Avantiverman of Kashmir in the 9th century A.D.

Somananda gives another legendary account of the propagation of Śaivism. In his *Śivadr̥sti* he tells us that in the beginning the *Śivarahasya* were in the mouth of the Sages, But under the impact of Kali age these repositories of spiritual knowledge disappeared from the world. Consequently, ignorance in the form of darkness enveloped the whole world plunging it in misery. Having pity on the suffering humanity Lord Śiva as Śrikanṭha appeared on the Kailāsa mountain and ordered Sage Durvāsā to spread the knowledge in the world contained in the Śāstras. The Sage created three mental sons to spread it. Being detached by nature, they took recluse in the mountaneous caves. The process of creating sons continued till the fifteenth son called Sangamaditya, an extrovert, got married with a Brahmin girl and came to settle down in Kashmir. It is in his family that Somananda the founder of Prtyabhijna system was born in the later half of the 9th cent. A.D.¹⁰

Now the question is why the Śiva Sūtras were revealed in the 9th cent. A.D. or Somananda appeared on the scene in the same century? What were the pressing circumstances which led to these scholars to propound a monistic philosophy at that time? The traditional answer may be that whenever there is degradation in society and the existence of *Dharma* is threatened, god incarnates himself to protect the both. On the basis of religious history of Kashmir we can say that in 8th century A.D., *Dharma* that is the *Vedic dharma*, preached by Nila was in danger because of the increasing influence of Buddhism. The Vedic authority was Challenged, sacrifices were stopped and the images of Purāṇic deities were replaced by the images of Buddha and Bhodhisattvas. The revealed religion was replaced by the created religion. The Buddhist intellectual were trying their best to show that the Vedic religion was shallow and without any logical base. It was mere a blind faith. Under such circumstance, lord Śiva instead of incarnating himself, appeared in the dream to salvage the eternal religion, the *Sanātan dharma*. But a rational and scientific answer lies in the socio-religious conditions in the valley at that time. As has already

been shown in the foregoing pages that the early mediaeval period in the valley was of economic and intellectual prosperity. Moreover, the Vedic scholars were becoming aware of the harm done by the two heterogeneous systems, especially by Buddhism to the ancient religion and were perturbed by the atrocities inflicted by them. This awareness was taking place not only in Kashmir but all over the country, and efforts were being made to restore the Vedic religion through Purāṇic cult. Thus a kind of religious renaissance was taking place all over the country as is corroborated by historical and archaeological evidences. In Kashmir also the scholars reacted against the atrocities of Buddhist scholars and tried to shake off the imposed religion. These Kashmiri scholars or *Pandits*, were immigrants in the valley from Gandhārh-Kalulistan, Kannoja and even from Teliṅgānā¹¹. They were staunch upholders of Vedic religion and in rituals and were well versed in the four Vedas. They could no longer tolerate the harm done intellectually and physically to the people of Kashmir. The common man was conscious of the physical tortures inflicted by the Buddhists but was unamone of the intellectual harm done by them. The proof is that spirit of religions tolerance was found even upto the time of Jonaraja, who pays obeisana to Puranic deities as well as to Buddha and Jina¹². The common folk and the poets like Jonaraja could not discriminate between the orthodox and the hetrodox religions of that time. Absence of reference to monistic Saivism in the Kuttanimata of Damodaragupta, probably a contemporary of Vasugupta, also indicates that though it emerged against the Buddhist philosophy, yet it was confined to the intellectual circles and was not popular among the masses. Here Ajaya Mitra Sastri is very right when he observes, "It probably indicates that monistic Saiva philosophy being rather abstruce had not yet attracted the masses who stuck to popular forms of Śaivism"¹³. Actually philosophy has always been an exercise of the intellectuals. The common man never took interest in such exercises. He believes in following its applied side or religion and never cared to look into those tents which provide the base of it superstructure.

The Puranic cults, including Śaivism, which entered the valley, in ancient times had philosophical base, which was forgotten in due course. From the accounts given by Somananda and Abhinavagupta in their works, it is evident that Saiva cult had a philosophical base. It was imparted as a secret doctrine in the closed circle of teacher and taught. But with the passage of time the true philosophy was forgotten is accepted by Kshemaraja in his commentary on the Śiva Sūtra. Only the ritual and cult survived. It is also accorded by literary and archaeological evidences. When the scholars of Buddhism, like Nagarjuna and others started giving a philosophical base to the popular Buddhist religion of Kashmir, the need for reviving the philosophy behind the Śaiva cult was also felt by the Paṇḍits of Kashmir. The task was undertaken by the learned immigrant Brahmins. The metaphysical doctrines of Śaiva-cult which were confined to the closed circle of teacher and taught and probably existed even at the time of Buddhism, were given a systematic form by Vasugupta in the 8th century, A.D. He was the first human propounder of Saiva philosophy, in Kashmir. Since then many more scholars undertook the task of making monistic Saiva philosophy more logical and perfect. Such efforts continued for nearly four centuries till the Muslim attack.

Capable men, material and the immediate public need are three requisities according to K C Pandey for the emergence of a system. All the three things were present in the 8th century when monistic Śaiva philosophy emerged. The monistic Śaiva Tantras, on which the system is based, though had their origin outside the valley were brought to Kashmir by Atrigupta in early 8th century and the fourth ancestor of Sommananda who also came to settle down in the valley at that time. As far as the immediate public need was concerned it was felt when Nagarjuna came to power and started eradicating openly the popular religion and inflicting atrocities on the people. Here Kalhana observes. "After defeating in disputation all learned opponents, the enemies of tradition (Nagarjuna and others) brought to an end the rites prescribed in the Nīla Purāṇa"¹⁴.

This aroused antagonism of Brahmins. "The versatile Brahmins of Kashmir," says K. N. Dhar, "did not stop to lick his wounds inflicted by Buddhist propagation, but like a seasoned general attacked its weakest part, i.e. the silence about God"¹⁵. Need for a theistic philosophy was felt at that time as recorded by Varadaraja, in the introduction verse of his commentary on the Śiva Sūtra. He observes "When the world was over powered by atheist like Nagabhodhi and others who also refuted the existence of the self and God"¹⁶. The result was that a local Brahmin called Chandra-deva, a descendent of sage Kaśyapa systematized that the teachings of the local religion, which was in a floating condition. He did so because Nala was enraged by the flouting of the traditional customs and religions and had started causing heavy snow fall¹⁷.

The local religion at that time was Puranic religion as is clear from the foregoing pages. But the worship of Śiva in Ardhanārīśwara form predominated as is clear from the account of early kings given by the Nīlamata. Even at the time of religious controversy, the authority of the Nīlamata was quoted¹⁸. The traditional customs, flouted by the Buddhists, were also the rituals prescribed by the Nīlamata¹⁹ and the religion systematised by Chandradeva was of Nīlamata, which was a polytheistic Puranic religion mixed with local faith. The religion entered the valley with the sons of Manu after the emergence of the valley from the great lake. In other words it could be said that the popular religion of the valley, prior to the entrance of Buddhism was Vedic, which became popular there. But Śiva and his wife occupied an important place in the galaxy of other deities.

Later on Vaiṣṇavism followed by Buddhism also entered the valley. All the three religions were flourishing side by side without any feeling of animosity as accorded by the Nīlamata and the Rajtarāṅgi. Buhler also accepted it when he observes. In ancient times the prevalent faith in Kashmir was Saivism, but Buddhas and Bhāgavata-Vaiṣṇava too flourished²⁰. This resulted in mutual give and take between the Puranic religion and the

Buddhism. One provided ritualistic aspect the other philosophy without any support of scriptural authority. The analyses of the situation by K. C. Pandey is worth noticing here. He observes, "Thus there developed a religion which was neither purely Buddhistic nor purely Saivite, but was a harmonious mixture of the meditative and philosophical aspect of the one and the ritualistic aspect of the other, but as such it has no scriptural authority to support it"²¹.

The acceptance of monistic Tantras introduced by Atrigupta, with open arms indicates the immediate public need of that time. The Tantras provided a philosophic base to the regional faith. The people of Kashmir, who were trained upto this time in grasping the abstruse philosophical tenets, by Buddhism, took no time to accept the monistic philosophy of these Tantras. Since Tantras were also a part of Vedic literature, as said earlier, the people of Kashmir accepted them to provide philosophical base as well as scriptural authority to their religion. The Tantras, thus satisfied to intellectual need of the people. This led to the popularity of the Tantra in the valley. The Purāṇic Śaivism which was quite popular in the valley assumed the form of Tāntric Śaivism. This gave a fatal blow to the declining Buddhism. The 8th and 9th centuries saw a great upheaval all over India in general and in Kashmir in particular. The Buddhism was on its decline as seen in the earlier page and the old Brahmanism was fast catching up. With the efforts of Kumārila Bhaṭṭa, the Mīmāṃsaka, in about 750 A. D., the old Brahmanic rituals were revived and the appearance of āchārya Śaṅkar on the scene, the Vedic philosophy was revived. All this led to the fatal blow to Buddhism in India. Āchārya saṅkara uprooted the Buddhism during his *digvijaya* from the land of its birth. He also visited the valley in the second decade of the 9th century A. D. to establish Vedic religion after eradicating Buddhism from various parts of India²². His monistic idealism, *Advaitavāda*, with its harmonising spirit, provided a format to the prevalent religious faith in the valley. This helped the scholars of Kashmir to evolve a philosophical system out of the religious material

available to them at hand, on the pattern of *Advaitavāda*, which resulted in the birth of Kashmir Śaivism or monistic Śaivism.

The philosophy of Śaṅkara not only provided the model but also terminology and concepts. Its good example is Śaṅkara's *Dakṣiṇāmūrti Stotra* and its commentary written by his direct disciple Sureśwarācārya when compared with the concepts of the Pratyabhijñā system. Even important philosophical terms are used in similar sense in the Pratyabhijñā, system²³. This led Bülher to say "It (Pratyabhijñā philosophy) appears to be a pure idealism, and an application of Śaṅkarāchārya principles to the Śaiva Philosophy"²⁴.

Śaṅkara was also influenced by the Śaiva Tantra prevalent in the valley at that time. An interesting incident is recorded in the Bulletin²⁵ of the Baroda Museum and picture gallery, which shows the impact of Śakti cult on him which resulted in the composition of the *Saundaryalaharī* by him. Establishing of *Śrīcakra* in some of his *mathas* also testifies the impact of tantric practices on him. He was quite conversant with the Tantric literature is clear from the mention of sixty four Tantras in the said poem.

Śaṅkara purged the local religion of the valley of Buddhist element which had unknowingly entered it. In the words of K. C. Pandey "He purged the local faith of its Buddhist element, strengthened the position of the new Tantric creed, which was brought by the two immigrant families and had begun to be accepted by the populace"²⁶.

It is in these circumstances that Kashmir Śaivism emerged in the later part of the 9th cent. A. D. Vasugupta was the first who gave a systematic form to the philosophic ideas of the monistic Tantras in his *Śiva-sūtra* after the visit of Śaṅkara in the valley. The dream of Vasugupta, related with the revelation of the Sūtras, may be said to be caused by Śaṅkarāchārya, and incarnation of lord Śiva, for the satisfaction of the followers of tradition.

Vasugupta was quite sensitive to the need of his time. He knew well that though the people of his time had accepted Buddhism at par with purāṇic religion which resulted in erecting the temples of Purāṇic deities as well as monastries and images of Buddha and Boddhisattvas, yet in their hearts of heart they despised the atheist religion, which negated the existence of self also. Their old *Sanskāras* or impressions, percolated since Vedic times, when challenged, created a vacuum and bevilderment in their minds. Even the monistic philosophy of Śaṅkar, which provided a guide line for systematising their floating religion, could not satisfy their devotaional need. Hence it was not accepted in totality by the inhabitants of the valley who worshipped various Puranic deities since long. The qualified Brahman or God, who was a second rate citizen in the realm of Advaita Vedanta, could not satisfy the devotional need of the people. Literature of Kashmir Śaivism is full of such examples where Śaṅkara's *māyāvāda* is criticised for declaring individual, self, the god and the world as illusory. But 'Śaṅkara's model was accepted because it was the logical culmination of philosophical thoughts on one hand and on the other it gave a tool for harmonising the various religions cults. *Sūtras* such as 'the position of the various systems of philosophy are only various roles of that (consciousness)' ²⁷ are an attempt in this direction. Buhler is right when he observes, "It (Pratyabhijñā system) appears to be a pure idealism and an application of Śaṅkarāchārya's principles to Śaiva philosophy" ²⁸.

From Vasugupta flowed the stream of Kashmir Śaivism. He may be compared to Bhagiratha who brought the divine river Gaṅgā on earth by his penance. Similarly, Vasugupta was the first human being to reveal the mystic science, *rahasyavidyā*, for the people of Kashmir. His Śiva sūtras are just like the Brahmasūtra or the Dharma sūtra, written by Badrayan and Jaimini respectively, on which the followers of Kashmir Śaivism wrote commentaries. Thus a tradition came into being. These commentators like Kshemaraja and Varadaraja while commenting on the *sūtras* quoted

profusely from the Tantras not only to support their interpretations but to show that Vasugupta also followed an ancient tradition which had a divine origin. Thus in the history of philosophy the two *ācāryas*, Śaṅkar and Vasugupta, hold an unique positions as the propounder of Advaita philosophies. They are the fountain heads from whence emerged a continuous stream of monistic thought.

In its journey, Kashmir Śaivism has passed through many vicissitudes. In the begining it was dualistic in nature as is clear from the accounts of Somananda given in his *Śivadr̥ṣṭi* and by Kshemaraja in his commentary. But under changing circumstances dealt above, it became monistic in nature. The Śiva Sūtras are metaphysical and ethical in nature and hence are called also Śaiva Yoga or Śaiva-Samāveśā. They prescribe various methods or rules of conduct *upāyas*, such as Śāmbhava, Śakta and Aṇu, for achieving the metaphysical truth of life. The line of thought represented by the Sūtras, was developed by two *ācāryas*, Bhatta Kallat and Sommananda in two different directions in the 9th cent. A. D. . Kallat handed down the doctrine as a system of religion in his *Spandakārika*, where emphasis is laid on the intense contemplation for the individual aspirant for the realisation of God, within himself, Somananda on other hand, supplied the logical base to support the identity of individual self and Śiva in his *Śivadr̥ṣṭi* and thus rendered Śaivism a philosophy in true sense.

Kashmir Śaivism consists of the Krama, the Kula and the Pratyabhijñā systems, all monistic in nature and deal with Śāmbhava *upāya*, Śaktopāya and Aṇu *upāya*, respectively. They have their distinct traditions and literature with mythical origin and propagators.

The Kaul system was also prominent in the valley at the time of Śaivism. It also developed the philosophy of words of its own. It drew inspiration from the grammarians as Patanjali's *Mahābhāṣya* was quite popular in the circle of scholars. The concept of *Śabda Brahma* of the grammarians led Somananda and

Utapal to the concept of *Parāvaka*, which was later incorporated in Kashmir Śaivism by all philosophers onwards.

The Kaul system also synthesised between Śaiva and Sūkta cults also known as *Dakshina* and *Vāmamārgas* prevalent simultaneously in the valley. It assigned the origin of the two to the two faces of Śiva called *Vāma* and *Dakṣiṇa* facing north and south respectively. Even Kashmir Śaivism could not overlook it. Consequently, Śakti is accepted here as inseparable from Śiva. It is the very nature of Śiva. In the Śivadṛṣṭi this inseparable aspect is highlighted²⁹. The composing of the Spandakārikā in the 9th century is a good example of the prevalence of 'Śakti' cult in the valley. Scholars therefore, could not overlook it. They incorporated it in Kashmir Śaivism, as two aspects of the Same reality. Though they appear to be two substances, *padārthadvaya*, still they are one. The whole world is Śakti while Maheśwara is the repository of Śakti³⁰. The same idea is found in the Saundaryalaharī of 'Śankara, and the use of term '*Sāmarasya*' represents it.

Kaulism, thus contributed many things to monistic Śaivism. It is through this system that Śakti cult, the grammarian philosophy and the five 'Ms' were harmonised in the system. The use of five 'Ms' best suited to the geographical conditions of the valley. It did not despised the material aspect of life but tried to sublimate them. It emphasised the spiritual aspect of sex as we also find in the upanishadas. It tried to sublimate an individual in his surroundings. Here an aspirant is expected to raise himself from the level of senses to the spiritual level by identifying himself with the supreme being. A progeny of such a yogi will also be an inspired soul as is the case with Abhinavagupta. Even sexual interpretation of alphabets is based on the Upanisadas is accepted by Abhinavagupta in his Tantraloka³¹. Hence Jayaratha while commenting on them profusely quotes the Upanisadas to support his views. Thus we see that Kashmir Śaivism follows Tantric interpretation of the Śruti best suited to the time and place of its birth.

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5. *Tantrāloka* XII, 37.
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7. श्री कण्ठ देशवतार : परमकरुणया प्राप्त काश्मीर देशः ।
श्रीमन्नः पातु सा क्षादमिनववपुषा दक्षिणा मूर्ति देवः ॥ The Gurunāth parāmarṣa. 6.
8. R. T. V 152-155.
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बुद्धो वास्तु जिनोवास्तु वास्तव्य परं तस्मै नमः कूर्महेः ॥
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Archaeological Remains

To understand the art and architecture of the valley it is necessary to determine the factors responsible for the development of the fine arts in the valley.

The available historical evidences prove that ancient Kashmir was well connected with the Madhyadeśa on one hand and with the north-west provinces on the other. It was part of the extensive Kuṣāṇa empire under Kaniṣka I and his successors. Coins of Indo-Greek and Scytho-pārthians have been found in the valley of Kashmir. This proves a developed commercial relation between the valley and the north-west provinces ruled by the

Indo-Greeks, the Pārthians and the Kuṣāṇas, between 2nd century A.D. During Kaniṣka's time in 1st Century A.D., Kashmir was attached to the kingdom of Gandhāra. The rich archaeological remains, such as coins, ceramics, sculptures and other relics of the period of the Indo-Greeks, Pārthians and Śaka kings excavated in the valley speak about the commercial, cultural and political links that existed between Kashmir and the northwestern regions of Gandhāra and Udyāna.

The recent evidence from the Gilgit Chilas region indicates that the silk route joining India with China via Central Asia, passed through the region of Kashmir. The long connection of Kashmir with the regions of Gandhāra and Udyāna left an impact on the art and architecture of the Valley. Commenting on the early Buddhist architecture of Kashmir R.C. Kak observes : "The early Buddhist religious edifices of Kashmir have practically the same plan as the contemporay Buddhist building of Gandhāra".¹ The Hindu architecture of Kashmir, this could not escape the Greek influence. This impact of Gandhara art on the arch of trefoil, Pyramidal roofs of the temples and the images of deities of Hindu temple is clearly noticed. Some scholars regard Hindu temple as a modified version of a Buddhist *chaitya*. In the words of R.C. Kak a Hindu temple, in broad out lines, is "a *chaitya* built in the middle of a monastic courtyard."² Similar views have been expressed by scholars like Percy Brown and D. R. Sahni.

It was not only the religious factor for which Kashmir came into contact with the Madhyadesa and north-west through Buddhism theme was commercial reason also which was responsible for inter-relation of the valley with other areas.

Since ancient times Kashmir had been a centre of attraction for its woollen products and woollen shawls. These were exported to Egypt, Iran, the Arab countries and to Europe in early mediavel period. From Sanskrit and Tamil literature and inscriptions it is clear that in the age of the Śaka-Sātvāhanas,

Kashmir was a prosperous centre of commerce and was connected by road (*mahāpatha*) with north-west parth of Asia.³ In the *Mahābhārata*, there are occasional references to the product of Kashmir. This road was also used by scholars and religious teachers for establishing relations with Kashmir, the land of learning and a strong religious centre in ancient times.

As regards the art remains now available in the valiey, it must be pointed out that pre-Gupta remains are lacking. Only the literary references are there. The only monuments which can be assigned to the Kuṣāṇa period are the Buddhist structures at Harvan and Ushkar.

The art traits which emerged at the time of Aśoka and developed in the subsequent centuries due to inter-relations with the regions of Gandhāra and Udyāna left its distinct mark upon the later art of the valley. The Buddhist and the Hindu structures and plastic art were simulteneously influenced by the long contact with the Gandhār school of art. Hence we find a great deal of similarity between the two as far as the general design, technique and the use of material are concerned. Points of differences are also noticed due to the geographical and religious reasons. The Hindu temple architecture developed in the valley persents a uniform style initiated and developed locally under the general impact of Gandhara. It can clearly be noticed in the pyramidal roof gables, trefoil arches and quasidoric columns.

Some scholars have tried to trace the replica of trefoil arch in ancient Indian symbolism.⁴ But as the pre-Kuṣāṇa temples are not found in the valley, Percy Brown believes that the Brahmanical temples in Kashmir indicated the character and arrangement of Buddhist monastries of Gandhāra.⁵

As regards Śavism, it flourished in the valley from early times as discussed earlier. On the local coins of Ujjain we find, for the first time, Siva in an anthromorphic form. Some coins

show Śiva with Umā. There are several other coins on which the Nandi bull is shown looking at the deity as described in the Matsya Purāṇa. (*Deva Vikshṇa tatparah*). Before the Kuṣāṇa period, Śiva was recognised as a deity of importance. The figures of Hindu deities alongwith lable inscriptions in Karoshṭhī discovered in the Gilgit-Hunjā region are of considerable importance. Mention may be made of the figures of Kṛiṣṇa and Balarāma.

The Kuṣāṇa kings were the worshippers of Śiva "On the coins of Kuṣāṇa king Wimakadphises," says B.C. Chattopadhyaya, "we have the human representation of Śiva with his mount bull and the Kuṣāṇa ruler is found to have used the epithet "*mahīśvara*" that in Sanskrit 'Maheśwara' or devotee of Śiva⁶. Even the Kuṣāṇa emperor Kaniṣka, though he patronized Buddhism, inscribed the name 'Oesho' (ahīśa or Śiva) on his coins. His successors Hiviṣka and Vāsudeva I also used their coins with the name and figure of Śiva on them.

The coins of Kuṣāṇa period are important from the iconographic point of view. Different attributes are placed in Śiva's hand. Figure of Umā, described as 'OMMO', is found a gold coin-type of Huviṣka. The figure of Ambikā, as found on the late Kuṣāṇa coins, can also be seen on Chandragupta-Kumardevi gold coins. In the words of Banerjea. "The god Śiva as he appears one-headed and two-armed on the coins of Vāsudeva, served as the prototype of the devices of some of the later Kuṣāṇa coins and those of the Kuṣāṇo sassanian rulers and many Hindu princes of India, like the kings of Kashmir.⁷

The Kuṣāṇa coins reveal a gradual development of the iconography of Śiva. On the earliest coins the deity is represented the zoomorphically, which on later coins its anthromorphic from is shown. Gradually the number of heads and arms, along with varied attributes also increased. These represented the terrific as well as the benign forms of Śiva. On same coins both these foms are seen synthesised.

The Kuṣāṇa gold coins found in the valley were used for commercial purposes. The coins of Toramāṇa are important. He is the same person as referred to by Kalhaṇa. These coins closely follow the coins of Kidāra-Kuṣāṇas, who ruled over the valley after the imperial Kuṣāṇas. On the Kidara-Kuṣāṇa gold and copper coins the king is depicted as standing on the obverse and a goddess holding lotus is seen on the reverse. The name of the king is written in Brāhmī characters. The later ruling dynasties of Kashmir adopted the device of the Kidāra-Kuṣāṇa. The coins of Pravarsena in gold and silver, have the image of the king standing to the left, holding, crescent topped sceptre in the left-hand. The right hand is stretched and there is a *triśula* above it. This king is Pravarsena II of Kalhaṇa's *Rājatarāṅgiṇī*. The emblems indicate that the king as a follower of Śaivism. The spouse of Śiva, seated on lion, is also depicted on some coins.

Apart from coins, the images of Śiva in aniconic and aniconic-iconic forms are also found from quite ancient times. The Bhitā (2nd cent. B.C.) and Gudimallan *lingas* clearly indicate the prevalence of śaiva-cult before the christian era. The *Jyotirlinga* had the same religious significance as the human representation of Śiva. For a chaste Hindu, the omnipresent God resides in every thing from the heart of a devotee to stones, trees, etc. The form of the god depends on the mental level of a devotee. To a *yogī*, the supreme Reality resides within the heart, but for a layman it is represented in images.

These images of deities are the representations of various philosophical concepts. This subtle Reality is concretised by various means, such as speech, pictorial and sculptural forms, signs and symbols. Thus *dhyāna mantra* and *Praṇāma mantra* are verbal representations while sculptural representations are physical ones of the god. The variety of forms represent various attributes of a deity described in the religious works, particularly in the *Ślīpa* texts and the *Purāṇas*. The variety of forms of these deities depend on

the intellectual level of a devotee. It is also essential to understand clearly the ideal, underlying symbology associated with Śiva.

We find a continuous chain of images of Śiva both aniconic and iconic, from quite ancient times. This throws light on the antiquity of Śaiva cult not only in India but out-side the country too. The development of Śiva images from the *Jyotirlinga* to a full fledged image indicates the changes in the mental capacity of devotees since ancient times. Just as the subtle concepts of the Vedas were interpreted in concrete forms in the epics and the Purāṇas, similarly the subtle representation of Śiva like *linga* become more concrete according to the descriptions of the Purāṇas. Here the various attributes of god were given gross symbolic forms and the images were made accordingly. Thus the five faces of Śiva suggest his five aspects. This form was appropriately designated as *Sadā Śiva*. In the later Upaniṣadas reference to *Panchānana Śiva*, are found.⁸ One, three, four, five and eight faces of Śiva are referred to in literature and such forms are known in the plastic art also. The Śaiva Āgamas discuss in detail the significance and symbolism behind these faces.

In Kashmir figures of deities assigned to pre-Christian era are lacking. Images of some Hindu gods and goddesses were carved in other parts of the country. In this respect, Mathura needs special reference. From the point of view of the development of Hindu iconography, Mathura was an important centre. Images of Śiva in its anthropomorphic form are found in Mathura from the time of Kuṣāṇa Kings. From the Kuṣāṇa period to 12th century A. D. icons of several Hindu deities were carved which included, apart from Śiva, images of *Aradhanārīśwara* and other members of his family such as Umā, Parvatī Gaṇeśa and Kārttikeya.⁹ This makes it clear that in ancient times Mathura was an important centre of Śaiva-cult. The *Śiva liṅgas*, with four heads facing the four directions, having a *uṣṇīṣa*, a *jaṭā mukūṭa*, curly hair and shaven head represent *uṣṇīṣa*, *Kapardin*, and other aspects of the deity. Such *Śiva liṅgas* are the precursors of the Gupta and early

mediaval *Śiva lingas* found in different parts of north India, including Kashmir. Although the Guptas were *Bhāgvatas*, their policy was of religious tolerance which left a mark on the art of the period. In the mediaval period, in Mathura, the Puranic religion became quite popular.

Another important place from cultural and religious points of view was Kannauj in ancient times. During the reign of Harṣa in 7th Cent. A. D., it was a centre of religious tolerance. After his death, with the revival of Brahmanism, it became a centre of Brahmanism. The Chinese traveller Hiven Tsang noticed two hundred temples of Hindu deities when he visited this place. But when Mahamood Gazni attacked after three centuries, the number of temples had gone upto ten thousand. This clearly indicates the popularity of Brahmanic religion in Kannauj. It was also famous for learning and scholars received due honour in the courts of Kannauj rulers.

After the Gupta period Kannauj become a centre of architecture and sculpture, especially of the Hindu deities. These include the images of Viṣṇu, Śiva, Mahā—Vishṇu, Sūrya, Durgā Gaṇeśa and others. Some years ago a unique image showing the marriage of Śiva and Pārvatī, (*Umā Parīṇaya*), has been found at Kannauj. The *Śiva-lingas* found there are one faced and four faced. All these throw a flood of light on the art of icon-making in north India. These pieces not only show the advanced technique of image making, but are the back ground of decorative patterns and expression. The images found there are good examples of the aesthetic sense and knowledge of iconography on the part of artists of Madhyadeśa, of which Kannauj was a representative centre during the early mediaval period, where literature and art were cultivated. Scholars, artists and religious people were invited to Kannauj. The rulers of far off places took pride in inviting scholars to Kannauj. According to the *Rājtaranginī* king Jaluka took religious and practical men from Kannauj to Kashmir. Lalitaditya took away Atrigupta from Kannauj as he was regarded 'Jewel of

Jambudvīpa' and was quite well versed in different fields of culture religion and education. Kalhaṇa tells us that Lalitaditya Mukatapida, the king of Kashmir defeated Yashoverman, the king of Kannauj in the 7th Century A. D., "*Samūlam Utpātayat*," and brought Kannauj under his subjugation. Gayapida Vinayaditya also attached it. The result was that scholars, artists and religious people migrated from Kannauj to Kashmir, which was on the main route of Uttarāpatha.

The close relations between Kanyakubja and Kashmir continued for centuries after the Gupta period. This created a good effect on the art and literature of Kashmir. The religious practices, philosophical ideas and images of deities bear eloquent testimonies of this.

Between Kashmir and Madhyadeśa exchange of ideas, religious thought and art devices took place along with the exchange of commercial goods. The śaiva cult of Mathura and images of Śiva and his family left a profound impact on the religion, culture and art of Kannauj, from where the influence travelled into the valley. The various forms of *Jyotirlingas*, with one, four or five faces, found in the valley at different places stand in the same series of icon making, which had its roots in the art of Mathura and Kanyakubja. From the history of *Sadā Śiva* images, found at different place in India, it is clear that the worship of *Sadā Śiva* or five faced Śiva goes back to the Śunga period. In the Kuṣāṇa period, the worship of *Eka Mukha* and *Caturmukha linga* having a circular top, became a common mode of worship. During the Gupta and later periods, making of four faced *Śiva lingas* became even more popular. Such *Lingas*, besides being enshrined in temples, were also installed on platforms under trees for worship¹². The huge four faced *Śiva linga* found in Sheeri is a good example of this tradition in Kashmir.

The Viṣṇudharmotara Purāṇa, the Śiva Purāṇa and other iconographic works such as the Aparājitprcchā and the Rūpamaṇ-

dana give details of the five heads which constitute the *Sadā Śiva* form of Śiva.

With the passage of time and ideological evolution new iconographic forms of gods and goddesses were evolved during the early medieval period. Consequently, less manifest images were replaced, by the manifest ones. Thus *Śiva liṅgas* were replaced by Śive images in human form. The four faced *Śivaliṅga* was transformed into a purely human form. Even the number of attribution increased accordingly. Hence the increased arms were shown holding different attributes. The *avyakta* form of Śiva image became *Vyakta* in the anthropomorphic images. One reason behind this evolution can be assigned to the decreasing comprehensive power of the devotees on the one hand and the evolution of philosophical concepts on the other. The impact of Śiva Tantras cannot be over looked in this respect. With the spread of Tāntricism in north India, the art of image making could not remain unaffected. In various Śaiva cults such as *Śudha Śaiva*, *Āgamānta Śaiva* and *Pāśupta Śaiva*, Śiva images were an asset in rituals. The images of *Sadā Śiva* in the valley are the result of the Tantra Āgamas. Behind them is underlying the philosophical concepts of Śaivism. Thus they are material representation of abstruse philosophical concepts and hence an essential part of ritualism. But in the monastic school of Śaivism, much importance was not given to the images. The followers of monastic school of Śaivism, says Banerjea, "were not much concerned with the worship of Śaivite icons, which appear to have been made much use of in their disciplinary *Sādhana*s by the *Pāśupatas* and Saivas"¹³.

Thus the history of icons in the valley has its roots in the Vedic tradition where it is said that there is only one reality the scholars describe it differently, "*ekam sad viprah bahudha vadanti*". This philosophical idea was developed in the early smṛtis and the Puṇas, giving birth to different religious cults. The various concepts related with this one Reality, which is beyond the mind

and speech, were given gross forms through words and images for an ignorant person or for a person who fails to comprehend the Reality in himself like a *yogī* as says the *jātālopniṣad*.¹⁴

Around these images of different deities evolved various religious cults. Still emphasis was on harmonising them. Consequently, images of different deities, put together as in the *Ardhanārīśvara* form, of the five faced Siva, where each face represents four different deities, represent the harmonising spirit, which had its birth in the off quoted vedic saying, where Reality is said to be one while it is described as many. Thus the art of icon making is an attempt to reassert what was ingrained in the Vedas. The monistic philosophy of Śaṅkara and of Kashmir are similar attempts in the field of philosophical probing. One may call it syncretistic trend in Indian art and philosophy.

What is true of the evolution of iconography in the field of religion, the same is true with the evolution of temples, the abode of deities. As a deity represents reality or self, its abode, that is temple represents human body, where it resides. Studied in this light, a Hindu temple is a symbol of human body. In the *garbhagrha* of a temple the deity resides in the same manner as god resides in the heart of a devotee. Thus the Almighty, residing in human body, is externalised or materialised through image and temple. In Indian philosophical thought the human body is regarded as the microcosm of the universe, the macrocosm, *Yat Brahmāṇḍe tat pinde*. Hence the human body with the self represents the universe with God or Absolute Reality in it. A temple is nothing but the materialisation of this abstruse philosophical idea. Even the Buddhists have borrowed the Vedic idea in building up their *chaityas* and putting the *Prāṇa Sameta* remains of the Buddha in the *chaityas* and *stūpas*.¹⁵ It is true that the structural monuments datant in the Kashmir valley are of early mediaval period. It cannot be said that the Hindu temples borrowed the idea from the Buddhist *chaityas*. On the contrary, it may be said that the

idea of *Chaitya* building was derived from the Vedic concept alongwith other philosophical concepts of the Vedas and the Purāṇas. General philosophical concepts and religious ideas have come to the later homogenous philosophy and religion through Buddhism.

The buildings of the mediaval period in Kashmir from the 6th to 13th century A.D. may be classified into two categories: the Buddhist and the Hindu, on the basis of religions prevalent at that time in the valley. Here we are concerned with buildings, including Hindu temples, especially the Śiva tepmles.

Kallar ascended the throne in the 9th centurey A.D. in Gandhāra. He has been identified with Lalliya Shai of the Rājtaranginī, a contemporary of Sankarvarman of Kashmir. They form a new chapter in the history of religion in Kashmir. It is with the accession of Hindu Shai rulers in Gandhāra that the Brahmanical religion revived in Gandhāra, Udyana and Kashmir. This is confirmed by the coinage and the temple architecture. The 9th century was a period of great Brahmanic activity in Gandhara. The influence of Gandhāra on Kashmir can be confirmed by the erection of Bhima-Keśava temple there by the grandfather of queen Diddā, who was married to Kshemagupta of Kashmir.

The Śaiva temples found in the valley belong to the early medieval period ranging from 600 A.D. on wards. Literary and arcaeological evidence prove that the Śaiva cult was the prominent religion of the valley, which had entered there with the exchange of religious thought between Gandhāra and Kashmir. The temples found at Kalar, Amb, Mallot and other places are Brahmanical buildings. From their style, they can be assigned to the same period of Kashmir rule when temple building was flourishing there, that is from Cir. 600 to Cir. 900 A.D.

The earliest example of temple building is that of Mārtanda, which according to several temples were built by Lalitaditya

in the middle of 8th Century A.D. It is the finest example of ancient Kashmir style bearing the influence of Indo-Hellenistic art of Gandhāra and of Madhyadeśa. 'It is the architectural lion of Kashmir', the most finished of all Kashmir temples. Other temples which need mention are the Avantīswāmī temple, the Śankarāchārya temple, Pandarethan temple, Chakradhara temple and others built during the period under review.

The Śankarāchārya temple, built on the Takht-i-Sulaiman hill, known as Gopādri in Hindu times and Gopakara in local tradition, is of great importance. According to some archeologists it is the precursor of the much more grandiose and renowned temples of the valley like Mārtanḍa and Avantīswāmī etc. Scholars are not unanimous regarding its date. They put it from 220 B.C. to the mediaeval period. But one thing is certain about it is that it was connected with the worship of *Jyestha Rudra*, built by Gopāditya,¹⁶ in 6th century A.D. on the site of an old temple built about 200 B.C. by Jalauka, the son of Aśoka. It was later repaired by Lalitaditya in 8th the century A.D.

It is built on a high octagonal platform enclosed by a low parapet wall, adorned on the inside by a range of eighty four round headed niches in triangular steps. Inside the temple there is a huge *śiva liṅga*, of later date. (Pl. I.)

In the village of Triphar, originally *Tripureśwara* or *Tripureśa* as referred to in the *Rājtarāṅgini*,¹⁷ there was a temple of Jyestheśvara. The legend of destroying the demon Tripura by Śiva and the worship of Mahādeva of the neighbouring peak of his name, is associated with this place. The *Nīlamata* and other *Māhātmyas* speak highly of this sacred place in ancient times.

The Payāra temple, according to R. C. Kak was built by Narendraditya. The image found from the temple goes to prove it as a Śaiva temple. Here Śiva is seen in the *Yoga mudrā*, seated on a throne. On the north side, the relief represents Bhairava,

the terrific Śiva with six arms in dancing form. Three headed śiva is also figured on this side. The southern relief also represent śiva in *yoga mudrā*. A seated female figure is there in the left corner which is probably his consort Pārvatī. The cult image of the temple is a *śiva linga*. The temple probably belongs to the 11th century.

In Patan, known as *Śankarapuspatana* in ancient times after the name of its founder Sankarvarman in the 19th century A.D.,¹⁸ three Śiva temple were built by the king, his wife and his minister.

In the village of Wangath, situated on Srinagar-Sonamarga highway, there is a temple identified by Stein as Jyestheśa temple built by Lalitaditya. There are other temples too, among which the largest one is identified as the śiva Bhūteśwara and the other one is of Bhairava.

In Babbour, ancient name *Bahbrapura*, as mentioned in the Rājtaranginī, there are small temples. There is small *pīṭha* with four *śiva lingas* along with a centre *śiva linga* all broken. The importance of the temple lies in, depicting Bhairava with a dog and four armed Śiva with a bull. The loose images lying about in the courtyard are of considerable importance from the point of religion and art. Among these are images of Bhairava and Nataraja Śiva.

According to R. C. Kak, a successful blending of the decorative feature of the Kashmir temples with the Indo-Āryan style of northern India can be seen here.¹⁹

In Pandrethan, ancient name *Puraṇādhisthāna*, images of the Buddha, Viṣṇu and Śiva have been discovered. The images of Śiva's various forms such as Lakuliśa (Pl II) and Bhairava (Pl. III), found there prove that the śaiva-cult was prominent there. The Pandrethan temple (Pl. IV) is dedicated to Śiva. It is

situated at Sonavara, three kilometre from Srinagar. The period allotted to it by scholars is 10th century A.D. It stands on the middle of a small tank and consists of a single chamber. The ceiling of the temple is carved. On the plinth of the temple is a chain of elephant heads, *gajahara*.

The reign of Avantiverman was of peace and prosperity. Kalhana, his court poet, records in detail the achievement of his patron. The increase in the number of Hindu deities, clearly indicates the revival of Brahmanism in the valley. Image of Viṣṇu and Śiva are found there. An important image of Śiva-cult is that of *Ardhanārīśwara*. (Pl. V). The right and left part of Śiva and Pārvatī respectively, are decorated according to their representations. Their children Gaṇeśa and Kārtikeya stand on right and left side respectively, with head of Nandī, the bull, thrust forward. Here the whole Śiva family is represented in a single piece. Images of Kārttikeya with peacock (Pl. VI), Gadādevī (Pl. VII) and a three headed *Śiva liṅg*, *G-upkar Śiva* (Pl. VIII) are also found there.

In Baramula, ancient *Varāhmula* a human faced *Śiva liṅga* is found (Pl. IX). According to the local tradition, it stood near the site of the present Kotitīrth.

16 Km. from Baramula, there are the ruins of a Śiva temple in Fatehagarh (Pl. X). There the *Śiva liṅga* is five faced (Pl. XI) representing the *Sadā Śiva* aspect.

In Sheeri, seven kilometres from Baramula, a huge five faced *Śivaliṅga* (Pl. XI) is found. At present it is lying in a paddy field in open. No sign of any temple ever built is found. This indicates that a tradition of building *Śiva liṅga* in the open existed. The exposed height of the *liṅga* is twelve feet, ten feet is still buried in the ground. Its diameter is 6 to 7 feet. One of the faces can distinctly be judged to be of a female (Pl. XIII) who is Umā. While the other three faces represent *Aghora*, *Sadā Śiva* and *Vāmadeva*, facing the four directions. The fifth face is of

Bhairava, facing the sky. Of these faces two are completely defaced.

Seventyfour kilometres from Srinagar is Verinaga, which is reputed as the source of the river Jhelum. Its ancient name was Nīlanāga and was sacred to the deity Nīla. From the western side of the spring general images of *Ardhanārīśvara Śiva*, Gaṇeśa, Viṣṇu and Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa probably belonging to the 12th century A. D. have been found.

There are other places where temples of Śiva, Viṣṇu, *Ardhanārīśvara* have been located.

From the images found at various places in Kashmir, it is clear that in the medieval period the prominent cult was of Śiva, while her deities such as Viṣṇu, Gaṇeśa etc. were also worshipped. Another point which is noteworthy is that equally prominent cult of Devī was harmonised with Śaiva-cult, is clear from the images of *Ardhanārīśvara*. Other purāṇic deities were also worshipped at that time. The worship of *Panchadevas* was popular here during this time, as was the case with Madhyadeśa.

From the antiquities of Basohei and Ramanagar, the popularity of Śaiva-cult is clear. In Ballapura a temple of Harihara existed. It was held sacred to Śiva. Other sculptures of Brahmanic deities such as Viṣṇu, Gaṇeśa, Brahmā, Bhairava are also recovered from these places.

Three faced Śiva in the *Ūrdhvamedhṛa* form is a rare stone sculpture from the valley. It bears an elaborate crown on the head. Other ornaments include an artistic *vanamālā*, *Karṇakunḍala*, *gucchakahāra*, *yajyopavīta* and *mekhalā*. The deity wears *dhotī* and the upper part of the body is bare. The third eye is shown on the forehead. Śiva is shown here in *yogamudrā* with half closed eyes. The time of the image is 6th century A. D. (Pl.XIV).

From the sculptures found at various places in the valley and on the basis of literary evidences, it is clear that Śiva was worshipped in various forms such as *jyotirlinga*, *mukhalinga*, Śiva along with Umā and as *Ardhanārīśvara*. He was also worshipped in his benine form as well as in the terrific form such as *Yogirāja* and *Tripurāri*. Śiva as a dancer, *Naṭarāja*, was also a popular form of the deity. He was also worshipped also alongwith Viṣṇu as *Harihara*.

Apart from the art and literary evidence, inscriptions also go to prove the prevalence of Brahmanical cults in the valley in medieval period with the prominence of Śaiva-cult. The inscriptions of queen Diddā's reign in 992 A. D. contain references to the Brahmanical deities such as Gaurī, Kārttikeya, Gaṇapati, Āditya etc. throwing light on the contemporary religious condition.

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5. P. Brown, *Indian Architecture*, Vol. I. p. 120.
6. *Coins and Icons, a study of myths and symbols in Indian numismatic art*, p. 11.
7. *Op. cit.* p. 128.
8. Kaivalya Up. 7. 18; Taittarīya Up. X 43-47
9. K. D. Bajpai, *Braja Kā Itihās*.
10. R. K. Dixit, *Uttarpaadesh Ke Sānskritik Kendra (Kanauja)*.
11. R. T. IV 140.
12. B. N. Sharma, *Iconography of Śadāsīva* p. 16.
13. *Develodment of Hindu Iconography*, p. 454.
14. जिवमात्मनि पश्यन्ति प्रतिमासु न योगिनेः ।
अज्ञानां भावनायाय प्रतिमाः परिकल्पिताः ॥
15. Vasudeva Upadhyay, *Prochīnā Bhārīya Stupa. Gufā Even Mandir*.
pp. 205-206
16. R. T. Vol. II. p. 290.
17. Ibid. V. 46.
18. Ibid V 55-59.
19. *Antiquities of Basohli and Ramanagara*, p. 27.
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Resume

The emergence of Kashmir Śaivism in the valley in 8th century A. D. brought a revolutionary change in all walks of life. This systematic philosophy gave an insight to the scholars, artists and even the laymen to interpret literature, art, religion etc. in its light.

The later part of the middle period was of literary activity in Kashmir. It was a period when new theories in the field of poetry and grammar were propounded and new schools of thought were emerging. The reasons for this are not far to seek. One such reason was the geographical position of the valley. Surroun-

ded by lofty mountains and scattered with beautiful lakes and meadows, it provided a congenial atmosphere for the scholars and artists to do their work unhampered. The inflow of scholars from other parts of the country helped in the exchange of ideas in various field of literature and religion. When the other parts of the country were being attacked by foreigners, the valley remained almost undisturbed. Consequently, scholars of far flung areas were attracted towards it and those who resided in the valley continued their literary and philosophical activities without being disturbed. All this helped the valley in becoming a big centre of learning. This resulted in producing a considerable mass of literature in the field of grammar, philosophy, poetry, literature etc. especially in the later part of the middle century. The new ideas which emanated here are the outcome of a coalition of ancient cultures and synthesis of religions and social traditions. One such system of thought is Kashmir Śaivism or Pratyabhijñā system of philosophy, which is a unique contribution of the valley.

The scholars of philosophy were of versatile genius; They not only wrote books on philosophy but also tried to interpret theories of poetry and grammar in the light of Kashmir philosophy. Consequently, a revolutionary change took place in the field of poetry. Since in India philosophy had been the source of inspiration for literature, art and religion, hence with the emergence of Śaivism in Kashmir, the theories of poetries were remodeled in its light. Yaman in his *Kauyālankārasūtravritti* propounded the *Rīti* theory which obtained considerable recognition in the country.

Philosophers like Abinavagupta and others, while writing commentaries on the *Nāṭyaśāstra* of Bharata and the *Dhwanyāloka* gave a philosophic interpretation to these *Sāstras*.

The *rasa* theory propounded by Bharata gathered much controversy after him. But soon it was realised that the soul of poetry is *Rasa*. But it was in the 9th century that formal exposition

of *Rasa sūtra* was given a philosophic ground and thus the real source of literary enjoyment was determined. Abhinavagupta, a prolific writer of Kashmir Śaivism came forward with his commentaries on Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* and Anandavardhana's *Dhvanyāloka*. In expounding the *Rasa*-theory, he tried to explain clearly how the *vyakti* or *vyanjana* of the Dhvani theorists could be applied to the case of the manifestation of *Rasa*. He thus co-related the *Dhvani* theory with *Rasa* theory and also gave it a philosophical base. He thus boldly declared that *rasa* is the essence of poetry and not one of the components of the poetry. According to him *vastu*, *alankāra* and *dhvani* all resolve in *rasa*. The propoundings of Abhinava brought a revolutionary change in the world of poetry. Consequently, the later writers of poetry took head of *Rasa-Dhvani* theory of Abhinava gupta. Scholars like Mammata and Visvanatha took inspiration from him and developed their theories of poetics on the same line.

As in the Upaniṣada, Brahman is equated with *rasa*, similarly Abhinava also equated *rasa* with Parama Śiva, the unmixed bliss. At the time of creation Paramaśiva hides himself in his manifestations and thus imposes value and beauty on every object. During meditation a person realises this bliss in himself. Similarly, in literature *rasa* is nothing but the blissful nature of an individual, which is experienced by the reader when he shakes off his individuality and identifies himself with the feelings of the hero. Thus the poignancy of this aesthetic pleasure depends on the training of the reader. It depends on how far he can shake off his individuality and identify himself with the hero.

The whole proces of *rasa-niṣpatti* is, thus based on the philosophical doctrine of Śaivism, where it is accepted that when an individual shakes off his individuality, imposed by ignorance, only then he realises his true self, *Parama Siva*. Thus in meditation and as well as while reading a piece of literary art, it is the bliss aspect of one's self which is realised in its generic form. The sentiment or *rasa* thus evoked is essentially universal in character

and the aesthetic pleasure resulting from it is not individual, though it is enjoyed as an intimate personal feeling.

Some figures of speech, such as *smaraṇa*, *pariṇāma* and *ullekha* were included in the list of *alankāras* while some *alankāras* such as *Bhāvika* were given new orientation under the influence of Śaiva philosophy.

After Abhinava, as said earlier, the poets down by the started propounding new theories on the line laid great śaiva philosopher.

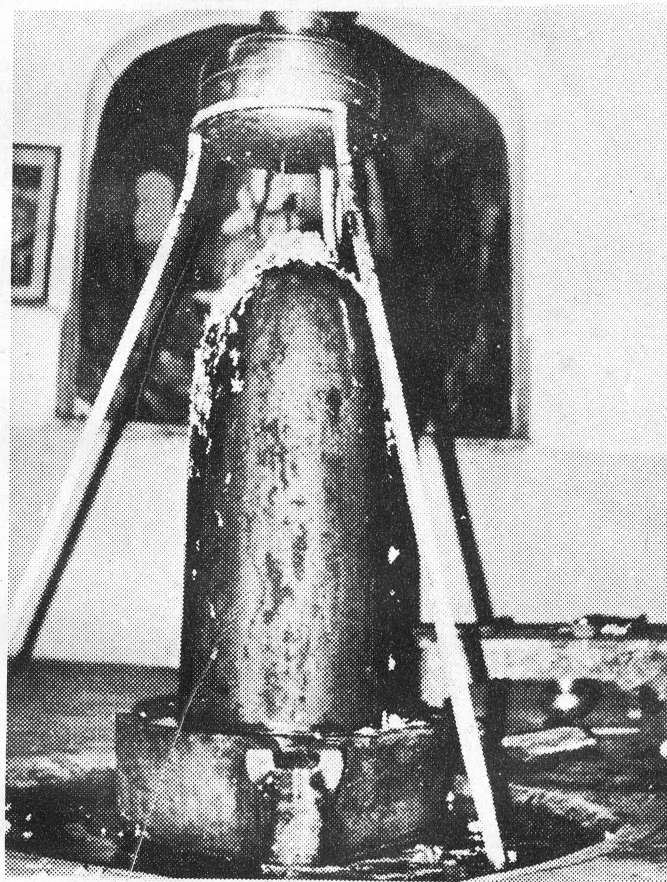
The far reaching impact of Kashmir Śaivism also be discover on the *Riṣi* order of the valley, which has its birth in the 15th century A. D. Shaikha Nurud-Din, also known as Nunda Riṣi, was responsible for its growth and popularity in the valley, though Hindu Riṣi were there in the valley before Nurud-Din, the father of Riṣi Order. He not only renewed the old tradition of the sages but also Islamized them.

Another great personality on whom the impact of Kashmir gaivism can be seen was Lalleśwarī, also known as Lalladyada. She was the living epitome of Śaivism. She flourished between 14th and 15th centuries and was a senior contemporary of Riṣi Nunda. She was a practical exponent of the philosophy in her own way. Her sayings are resplendent what she practised in life. She rejected most of the established religious dogmas and rituals.

Scholars holds controversial views about the impact of philosophy on Lalladyada. Some scholars hold that she was influenced by Muslim saints such as Saiyad Alīhamadānī. Others hold the view that the indiginous philosophy of Kashmir was responsible in influencing the life of the lady. When the Muslims attacked the country scholars and ascetics were compelled to take shelter in the far off provinces like Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Garhwal and Varanasi. These asceties did not believe in

acquiring religions or theological knowledge, but were interested in the practical side of Yoga, observing penances and renouncing worldly pleasures of life as the Hindu and Buddhist monks did. When Sufism entered the valley, it could not escape the impact of Kashmir Śaivism, a popular religion and philosophy of that time. The result of the exchange of ideas led to the birth of the Rīṣi Order in the valley.

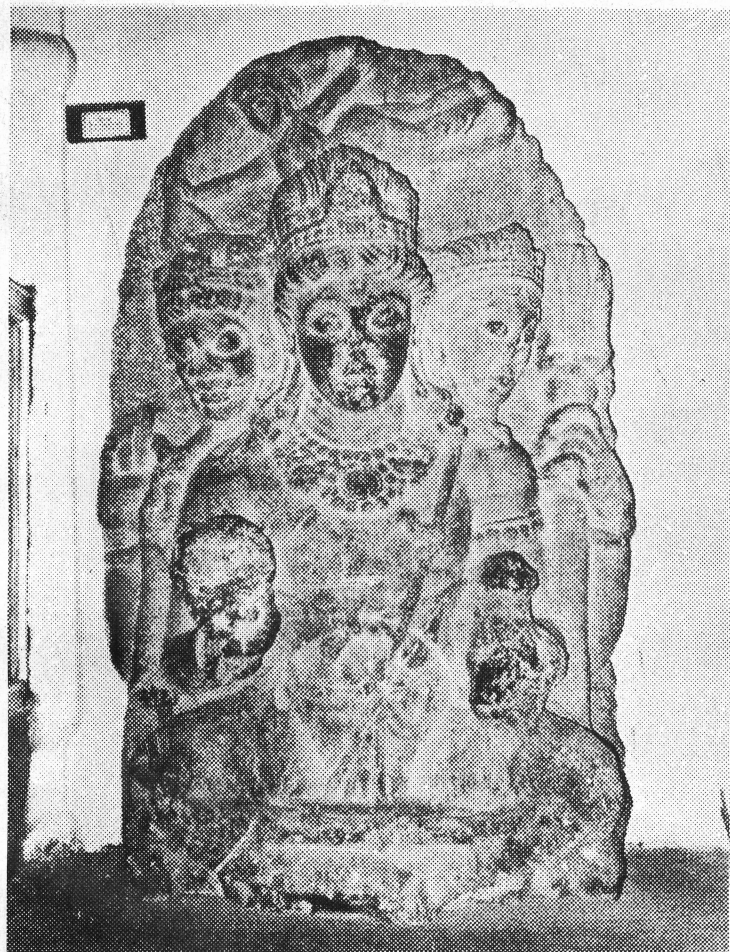
Even today the popular religion of the valley is Śaivism, with a philosophical background based on the *Āgama Śāstra*. *Śiva rātrī* is the famous religious festival of the Kashmiries which is celebrated in the month of *Phālguna*. The festival is connected with the marriage of lord Śiva with Pārvatī, the daughter of the Himalaya. Since Tantra is part of Kashmir Śaivism its impact can also be observed on the ritual at the time of *Sivarātrī* when meat is offered to the deity. The long uninterrupted tradition of Śaivism in Kashmir made its definite impact even outside the valley. The Kashmir Śaivism undoubtedly occupies a remarkable position in the religious history of India.



Pl. 1 Siva - ling



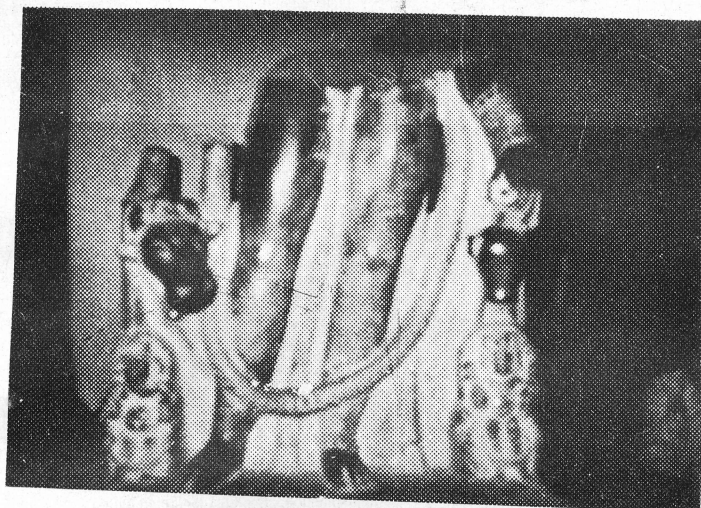
Pl. 2 Lakulisa



Pl. 3 Bhairava



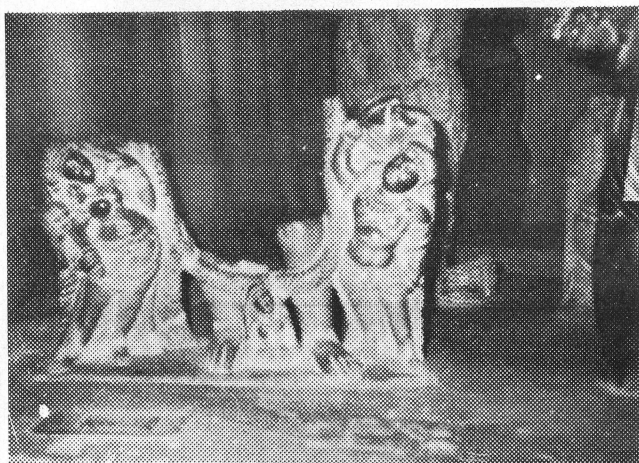
Pl. 4 Gajddhara



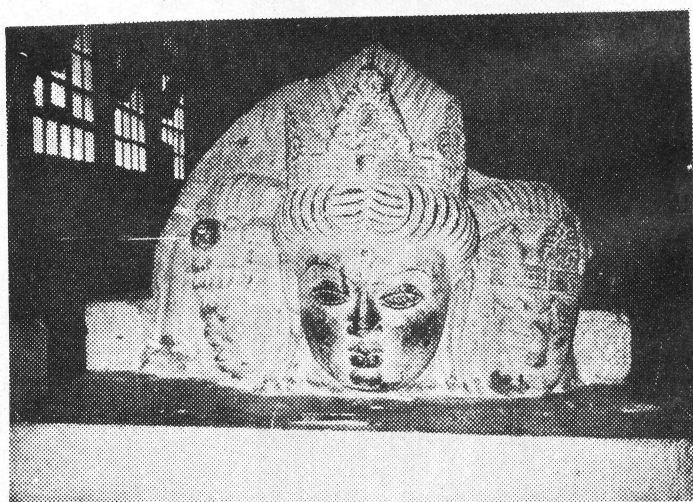
Pl. 5 Ardhanarishwara



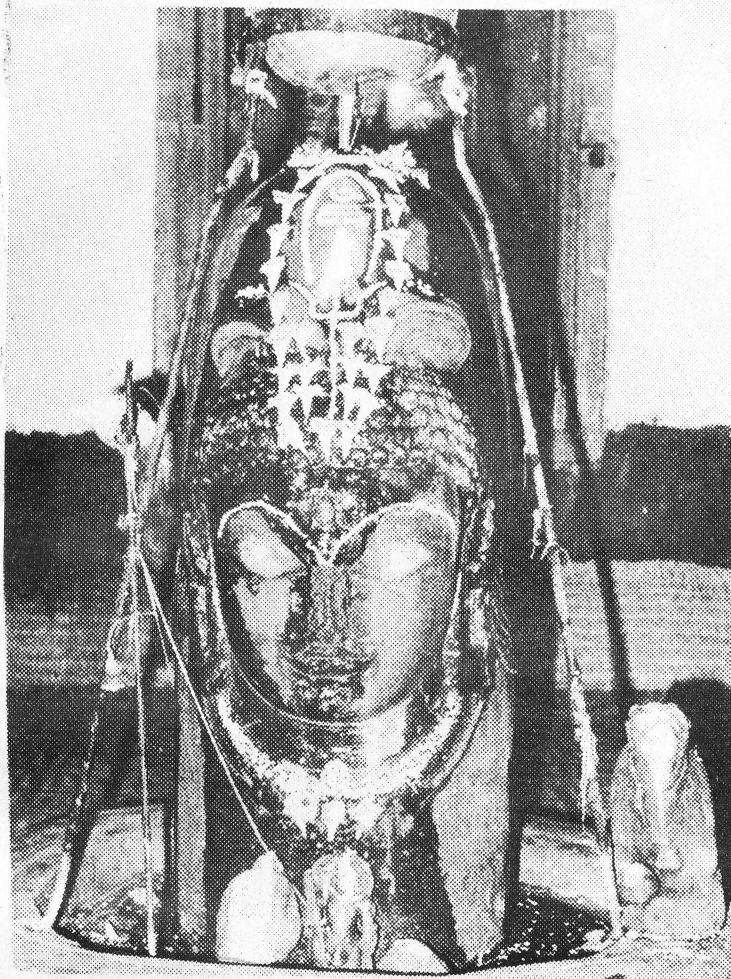
Pl. 6 Kartikeya with Peacock



Pl. 7 Gada devi



Pl. 8 Three haded Siva-ling (Gupkar Siva)



Pl. 9 Siva-Ling (Baramula)



Pl. 10 Siva-Ling (Fatehgarh Baramula)



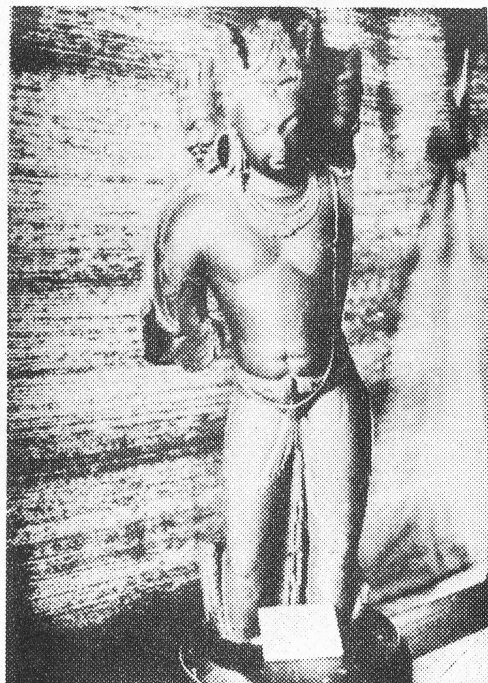
Pl. 11 Five faced Siva-Ling



Pl. 12 Siva Ling (Shedow)



Pl. 13 Female face



Pl. 14 Siva in yog-mudra





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